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HISTORICAL VIEW

OF THE

LITERATURE

OF THE

SOUTH OF EUROPE;

BY

J. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI

OF THE ACADEMY AND SOCIETY OF ARTS OF GENEVA,
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WILNA, OF THE ITALIAN ACADEMY
ETC. ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL.

WITH NOTES, AND A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THOMAS ROSCOE

Fourth Edition,
INCLUDING ALL THE NOTES FROM THE LAST PARIS EDITION

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The established reputation of M. de Sismondi, as an elegant and accomplished writer, will preclude the necessity of any apology, for presenting to the public a new edition of a work which has already, in its original form, acquired an extensive and merited celebrity. It has been the object of the Editor, in the revision of his task, to adhere as closely as possible to the text of the original; no part of which he has taken upon himself either to suppress or enlarge, with the exception of one or two peculiar instances, where the extent of the alteration is pointed out. With regard to the poetical extracts, introduced by M. de Sismondi, and which are generally translated by him into French prose, the Editor has adopted, where practicable, such established English translations as already existed. In other instances he has either been indebted to the kindness of his friends, or has been compelled to insert his own metrical versions.

In the Memoir appended to the present edition, it has been his endeavour to comprise, in a brief review, the principal facts and the most interesting topics connected with the life and labours of the Author; while he has avoided those of a merely controversial nature. He has, therefore, purposely abstained from any detail of the differences of opinion which existed between M. Sismondi and the historian of Lorenzo de' Medici, respecting "that great potentate," as he is justly denominated by Bacon, and which gave rise to the vindication of his character in a separate publication by Mr. Roscoe, entitled, "Illustrations of the Life," &c. He is unwilling, however, to dismiss these volumes without observing, that the controversy was conducted without the slightest degree of acrimony, and that it exhibited peculiar traits of

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character in [illegible]ment writers, who found, [illegible] of their views, that they aimed by different means [illegible]e noble and beneficent objects. So far from alienating the disputants, it elicited in both a greater respect for each other, and for the historical truths which they wished to establish; it gave rise to a friendly correspondence and an interchange of their works; and when M. Sismondi became the guest of Mr. Roscoe's son, at Liverpool, frequent interviews took place between the two historians, which served to confirm their mutual esteem and regard. There is indeed one passage in the letters of M. Sismondi to Mr. Roscoe, written in English, so full of that characteristic frankness and high feeling alluded to in the following Memoir, as to induce the Editor to insert it, in corroboration of the preceding remark. It is dated June 19, 1825, from Geneva. "I received," he says, "yesterday, with a sentiment of great pleasure, as well as gratitude, the very valuable tract on Penal Jurisprudence you have been so good as to send me. I hasten to acknowledge that gift, doubly valuable for me, as it brings testimony that no ill-will exists between us; and how could it where both were animated by the same sentiments and the same principles? Both were equally eager after truth, though they happened not to see it in the same light. I accept, then, with the warmest thanks, the book you have sent me as a pledge of friendship, which I return most eagerly.'

It is not improbable, that within a short period the present volumes will be followed by another, containing a selection from the miscellaneous works of M. Sismondi, on Politics and Political Economy, to be preceded by the celebrated Eloge on the Historian, pronounced by his distinguished contemporary, M. Mignet, at the Académie des Sciences, Morales et Politiques, at Paris; and which has not hitherto made its appearance in this country. Nor is the Editor without hopes of obtaining further valuable materials, from the private letters and journals of this accomplished and very attractive writer.

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LIFE OF

M. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI.

(G. C. LEONARDO SISMONDI.)

THIS very pleasing and spirited writer, and truly amiable man, was born at Geneva, May 9th, 1773. Descended from the noble family of the Sismondi, of Tuscan origin, and the last of that proud name, he appears not to have been insensible to the influence such a circumstance is calculated to exercise over the mind. Indeed few, if any, not excepting the noblest of our noble poets, have possessed sufficient self-sustaining power and pride of intellect to boast themselves wholly exempt from such a feeling. Though born and educated under a republic, M. de Sismondi himself felt and alludes to it in a tone of perfect frankness and with undisguised satisfaction, as an incentive to virtuous deeds. At the close of his able History of the French, he observes:—"I am a republican; but while preserving that ardent love of liberty transmitted to me by ancestors, whose fate was united with that of two republics, and a hatred of every kind of tyranny, I hope I have never shown a want of respect for those time-honoured and lofty recollections, which tend to foster virtue in noble blood, or for that sublime devotion in the chiefs of nations, which has often

reflected lustre on the annals of a whole people. It was impossible I could ever forget that the war-cry, so long dear to us, and which ceases to be heard in me, '*cara fè m' è la vostra*,' was given by an emperor of the house of Suabia to one of my ancestry, when he intercepted the assassin's blow with his own body, and preserved the life of Henry VI."

The Sismondi were Ghibellines, partisans of the emperor; and on the extinction of the Pisan republic in the 14th century, were compelled to seek refuge in France, and established themselves in Dauphiny, at the Côte de St. André. The exiles assumed the name of Simonde; and their descendants, adopting the opinions of the reformers, remained in France till the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when they retired to Geneva.* Here they were admitted as citizens, and their names inscribed in the rolls of aristocracy. The grandfather of the historian is said to have served in the French armies, and his father exercised the functions of evangelical minister in the town of Bessex, from which he subsequently returned to the republican city, where this distinguished writer first saw the light.

To his mother, a woman of superior mind and great energy, Sismondi appears to have been mainly indebted for the germs of those excellent qualities, both as a citizen and a writer, which later in life were so powerfully developed and admirably displayed. From her the future historian received his first intellectual impressions, no less than that early discipline of the heart and mind, without which no high inspired and virtuous efforts are long sustained, or crowned with perfect success. And it was of no evanescent character, but extended its beneficent influence through the many vicissitudes, the early toils and disappointments, the manly struggles, and the late matured triumphs of his literary career. The lofty and almost aristocratic feeling—however modified by popular principles—the pure sentiment, rising above every corrupt or vulgar taint, that sense of man's dignity and enlightened love of the people, every where so manifest in the writings of M. Sismondi, and which give to his profound researches a peculiar inte-

* Contemporains Illustres, p. 8. Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde, tome xxi. p. 329. Quarterly Review, No. 144

rest and charm, added to that of a singular vivacity and liveliness of style, may in part probably be referred to the same origin of early maternal instruction, and an influence which embued the thoughts, formed the taste, and seemed to tinge even the language and expressions of the author.

Sismondi's boyhood was in this respect a singularly happy one, and he would often recur to it in after life, with expressions of grateful pleasure. His family, too, was at that period in easy circumstances, being in possession of a country mansion, Chatelaine, agreeably situated at the confluence of the Rhone and the Arve, near the city of Geneva. Here the young Sismondi, the last of his race, spent several happy years, and pursued his earliest studies under the enlightened tuition of affectionate parents. Never treated as a mere child, he accompanied them in their little excursions; in those delightful walks and sails, which affording them the most enchanting views of river, lake, and mountain, and pleasant gardens surrounding their dwelling, full of sweet flowers —all around, "a scene of tempered sublimity and amenity" * threw an additional charm for an ardent and sensitive mind round that quiet and delicious campagne. Nor was society adapted to foster his early tastes and form his principles—his regard for popular government and national freedom—wanting in their immediate vicinity. "None of the elements of exasperation between rank and rank," observes one of his biographers, "which existed in France, were to be found here. Religion, however undermined by philosophy, had ostensibly at least her full sway, and the city may be said to have constituted one great family, and in which the family quarrels of preceding generations, if not entirely forgotten, appeared to be put at rest. It is the most pleasant of social comforts in a small town or community, that you are everywhere at home. No Genevese, from the highest to the lowest, was a stranger to another; every face was that of an acquaintance, if not a friend. Yet, as soon as the passions of political rancour had their full effect, all bonds were broken, and nowhere, perhaps, has there been a stronger exemplification of the contagious, or rather demoniacal madness, excited by the shedding

* Quarterly Review, No. 144. Contemporains Illustres, liv. 22.

of blood. Men, who were previously quiet, mild, and harmless citizens and fathers of families, became infuriate. One individual, a smith, a good-tempered merry fellow—perhaps he may be yet living—caused upwards of fifty of his fellow-citizens to be shot with the greatest glee. Let it be recollected, that these horrors were perpetrated not by a profligate, enthusiastic, or fanatical population, but by sober shop-keeping burgesses, men, naturally as money-getting and quiet as the rate-payers of Edinburgh and Aberdeen." *

In fact, the tempest was again gathering, which was to disperse this virtuous and united family. Young Sismondi had been placed at the college, or "high school" of Geneva, where he is stated to have given very slight promise of his future pre-eminence.† From the college, however, he was passed at the due age to the Auditoire, which is known to bear, in the system of public education adopted at Geneva, the same relation to the college that the university amongst us does to the school. At the same time he found in the society assembled at his then happy home, all most favourable to the full development of his moral or intellectual education, a number of distinguished strangers, not less than the *élite* of the residents near the spot, eagerly availing themselves of the opportunity to cultivate the friendship of a family, so much respected for its native worth.

Revolutionary troubles in France soon broke in upon these delightful *réunions*, so favourable to the expansion of a young and ardent mind, full of susceptibility to appreciate them. Domestic misfortunes as speedily followed in their train. Confiding in the financial policy of his friend Necker, the elder Sismondi had placed the whole of his disposable capital in the French funds, the failure of which at once compromised the peace and fortune of his family. It was now that the filial character of the son was put to its first trying test; he was to tear himself from a scene endeared by so many pleasant recollections and from his favourite studies for a far different home, and an occupation no way congenial to his pursuits. He at once entered as a clerk the

* Quarterly Review, No. 144.

† Galerie des Contemporains Illustres. Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde, *ib. ib.*

counting-house of the eminent firm, Eynard and Co. at Lyons.* However irksome such an employment, it was not without its beneficial influence, as he frequently observed, upon his future labours, by inducing habits of order and method, especially with regard to calculation, which greatly facilitated the inductions he had to make. A sense of duty, moreover, sustained him, and he applied himself heart and soul to the self-imposed task. Soon he became a thorough-bred clerk, and the mysteries of double entry, and even the courses of exchange, are said not to have been denied to his persevering toil. To such discipline, he ascribed his patience in pondering his matter over and over again, his rapid computation, and his power of applying to the inquiries, generally reputed the science of political economy, those lessons supplied by the experience of history.

Still pursued by revolution, its new outbreak at Lyons, in 1792, drove the young exile back to Geneva, and even followed him thither. His father, simply because he belonged to the old aristocracy, received a domiciliary visit, was heavily fined, and both he and his son were thrown into prison; but not a shadow of proof of anything political having been brought against them, they were speedily liberated. But it was time to seek a safer refuge; and in the spring of 1793, he accompanied his family to England. Having seen his father, mother, and sister comfortably established in the house of a country clergyman, from which they afterwards removed to Tenterden, he left them to cultivate an acquaintance with his adopted country, its language, men, and manners, in the capital. He applied himself to the study of our constitution and our laws, attended the courts of justice, and made himself familiar with the principles, as well as with the forms and practice of English polity. His quickness of perception and methodical plan of study during little more than a year's residence, enabled him to form correct views of our literature, institutions, and national character. He obtained materials for future investigation, as regarded our insular position, its relations to commerce, manufactures and agriculture, and for those enlarged views and correct

* Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde, *ib.* Life and Works of Sismondi. Bossi, Necrologia, Florence.

reasoning which, spurning all theories, aimed only at practical objects and results."*

Unfortunately for Sismondi's views of a continued residence in England, his mother suffered from that peculiar disease, *La Maladie du Pays*, which sets every remedy at defiance but one—a return to the loved and unforgotten home-land. The love of such a mother was deeply reciprocated; he hesitated not a moment, but urging her instant departure, hastened with his family to reoccupy their former residence at Chatelaine. This he did in the midst of revolutionary terrors, which spared not the little republic more than it did the mightiest monarchies. The palace, the senate, and the cottage were involved in the same devastating flame; and both father and son were again consigned to the gloom of a dungeon. †

It was only by the sacrifice of another confiscation that they recovered their liberty; while the four syndics of the city, men of unspotted integrity and blameless life, were prosecuted for treason to the nation, and condemned to die. One of their most intimate friends, M. Caila, had sought shelter after their return, at Chatelaine, which stood on the line of the French frontier; and it was arranged that when they should give the alarm, he was to cross it.

The subject of our memoir was entrusted by his mother, who almost idolized him, with the duty of acting as a sentinel, and watching over the safety of their friend. He kept his post; and in the dead of night, he was alarmed by the heavy tramp of the gens d'armes, and rushed to the door of the shed where M. Caila lay concealed. He slept so soundly, that his faithful sentinel failed to rouse him; the soldiers were entering the garden, and, doubtless, well informed, marched directly towards the spot. Young Sismondi had no alternative but to defend his friend or to fly; he chose the former, but was soon struck senseless by a blow from the but-end of a carbine.‡

The unfortunate Caila quietly surrendered himself; and Madame de Sismondi, in addition to her alarm for her son, had the pain

* Bossi, Necrologia. Life and Works of Sismondi. Encyclopédie, &c.

† *Ibid. ib.* Contemporains Illustres.

‡ Quarterly Review. Life and Writings of Sismondi. Bossi.

of beholding the old man, deaf and infirm, borne to instant death.

Other excesses and outrages, which continued without abatement, rendered all further thoughts of remaining near Geneva insupportable to them. They disposed of their remaining interest in Chatelaine; and fixing upon Italy, the seat of their forefathers, as the pleasantest place of refuge, resolved to settle in Tuscany. Upon reaching Florence, in October 1795, it was unanimously agreed (one heart and mind seeming to animate every movement of this attached family) that it would be most prudent to invest the small residue of their fortune in a farm. The younger chief of the little party—for he was at least a *moral* hero of the most rare and sterling stamp—set out alone and upon foot in search of some quiet resting place, amidst scenes where the forefathers of the wanderers, the last of their name, had borne all but a princely sway.*

Proceeding through Prato and Pistoja, the pedestrian entered the Val di Nievoli, the delightful aspect of which, combined with the cheapness of the land, induced him to select that site for a future residence. At Val Chiusa, near Pescia, he met with a small estate for sale; and having agreed upon the terms, he immediately took possession, and was there rejoined by his family. Here the young college student and merchant's clerk addressed himself to new duties, with a resolution to acquaint himself with the practice, as well as the improved theory of agriculture, on which he considered the welfare of a people to be mainly founded. Energy of character, with a facility in adapting his talents to existing circumstances, not the least valuable of qualities, enabled Sismondi to "put his hand to the plough" as readily as to the pen without "looking back;" and what is still better, without undue anxiety for the future.

Thus occupied for a period of five years, perhaps the pleasantest of his life, he omitted no means of enlarging his knowledge and extending his views upon a subject, which, studied long and profoundly in all its social and national bearings, proved of no small advantage to his future historical inquiries. His intelligent

* Bossi, Necrologia. History of the Italian Republics. Encyclopédie, &c.

management of a small estate, taught him the value of method and order, applied to matters of the highest national import; and hence it has been correctly observed,* "he acquired that train of thought which influenced his writings, namely, the valuing constitutions and forms of government, not as grounded upon abstract principles, but as subservient to the practical welfare of the people." Living, as he did, in the midst of an agricultural population, he obtained a degree of practical knowledge, rarely possessed by men of literature. He was happy also in the bosom of his family; his sister, in a short time, married and settled at Pescia; and what is not very common, though intimate with the Georgics, Columella, and that fine poem of his countryman, Alamanni, "La Coltevazione," he was fortunate enough to succeed in his farming experiments, and retain possession of his estate, which he often revisited up to the close of his distinguished career. Thus, all the circumstances of his life, combining with an enlightened and unremitting pursuit of knowledge, the study of history, and especially that of Italy, its departed splendour and free spirit of old, were quietly enabling Sismondi to dedicate to his country one of the best and noblest of his historic tasks. The "Italian Republics" is the work of a man who loved, and had mingled with the inhabitants of all classes, and who understood thoroughly by working the very ground, the peculiar character, essential interests, and moral and intellectual wants of the country on which he wrote. "He inhaled its air, he drank its streams, he felt its breezes, and sunned himself beneath its brilliant skies!"

But even in this rural and classic retreat, the relentless spirit of revolutionary persecution reached him. Studying how best to avoid observation, and to give offence to no party, he was suspected by all. He was arrested as an aristocrat by the French; by the Italians who rose against their tyranny, as a Frenchman; and was incarcerated four several times, according as one or the other party prevailed. Often, likewise, by taking the part of the oppressed who appealed to him, as in the case of M. Caila, he suffered for his humane zeal. Still these scenes and this sad experience were not lost upon him; his mind and faculties were being rapidly matured; and at this very period his

* Quarterly Review. Life and Works, &c

"Recherches sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres," proved to how much purpose he had thought and felt, as well as studied, and how impossible it is for the slightest circumstances to be lost upon the education and mind of the man of genius. It showed too, that in all his pursuits he was still occupied with the solution of those political problems which then shook the whole frame-work of European society to its centre. These "Researches" formed the ground-work of his histories; and of the history of the people, which he considered the basis of that of nations. He himself informs us, in a note penned only a few weeks before his death, that he began these historical labours in 1796; that they were never completed or published, being reserved as materials for other works; that he was engaged upon them upwards of five years; and that Constant, the political economist, who doubtless appreciated their value, submitted them to the judgment of the French Institute. They comprehended ten treatises: the two first an exposition of his principles regarding liberty and government; the third an analysis of the British constitution, the fourth that of the French republic; the fifth the ancient constitutions of Spain; sixth, the Italian republics; seventh, Sweden; eighth, Poland; ninth, the Hanseatic towns; and tenth, the United States of America; but all these in a work of such colossal extent formed rather the ground-work for histories, than histories in themselves.

Like the severe tests, however, of the mighty wrestlers at the Olympian Games, this herculean labour displayed at once the precocity and the maturity of his powers; he entered the literary arena well disciplined and well armed, and with an almost boundless ambition, which aimed at the highest prizes. Doubtless, so vast a field of research could not be traversed by a writer who had not completed his twenty-fifth year, with the confidence of experience, with clear decided views, or an accurate knowledge of the general or particular routes he was pursuing. He was compelled, from the disproportion of its parts and the difficulties attending its execution, to regard such a collection of materials, and its abstracts, as a rich unfailing source of reference—a future elaboration. And we thus find, in the author's preface to the various fragments, long afterwards published under the title of

"Etudes sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres"—that this production of his mature years, in which a noble love of liberty is always tempered and directed by unceasing vigilance how to prevent its excesses and licentiousness, scarcely differs with respect to its leading features from the grand work sketched out in his youth.*

Gradually led from the examination of principles to the knowledge of facts, from speculation to close observation of life and history, Sismondi from this time pursued with vigour and in well-sustained harmony, the two branches of literary composition, which were more especially destined to perpetuate his fame. "It is worth remarking," says M. Meunier,† in his memoir of the author, "that his labours in political economy bear as early a date as that of his historical researches. While engaged in collecting, at great expense of travel, researches and study, the extensive materials for his 'Republiques Italiennes,' he took advantage of his stay in Italy to acquaint himself with the condition of the peasantry, devoting his attention to the completion of a work abounding with curious facts and valuable observations, which he published at Geneva, in 1801, entitled 'Tableau de l'Agriculture des Toscans.' According to the same plan, he published, four years before the appearance of the first volume of his 'Republiques Italiennes,' his 'Traité sur la Richesse commerciale,' which the public, grateful to a young author who drew the attention of foreign states towards a science recently cultivated in England, was far from suspecting to be the production of the leisure hours of the future historian of Italy and of the French." ‡

It is not our purpose here to enter into M. Sismondi's views of political economy; these he is known to have considerably modified,§ and in some respects wholly changed, at different epochs in his brilliant career. They were the results of his disinterested convictions. In his more mature labours, it is enough to observe that he brings the most powerful arguments to bear against those

* Bossi, Necrologia.

† M. Meunier, Notice sur la Vie, &c. Encyclopédie, &c. Life and Works of Sismondi.

‡ M. Meunier, *ib.* Quarterly Review, No. 144.

§ Bossi. B. Constant.

maxims of the English school, to which he had first become attached. In his political principles, it is gratifying to reflect, there was never the least shadow of change; his veneration for public liberty and the virtue and dignity of the people, upon which he conceived the welfare of nations to be founded, was ever the same.

But while the opinions of M. Sismondi in favour of liberal institutions remained fixed and unaltered to the close of his life, his earlier formed principles of political economy received a shock from the phenomena presented by new scientific discoveries. We regret that we have not space to enter into the details of the changes in his ideas thus produced; but it will be sufficient to observe, that after giving, in his treatise on Commercial Wealth, his cordial assent to the doctrines of Adam Smith, he saw reason, after the experience of seventeen years, to adopt opposite impressions, and to oppose with ardour those opinions which he had previously supported with so much zeal and ability. His frank and noble nature impelled him to acknowledge that he believed he had been in error, and without any loss of dignity he pleaded what he considered the cause of the weak and oppressed against the powerful and the strong. Yet while he shunned, as he supposed, the rock of his former convictions, he carefully avoided the opposite shoal of modern socialism, which he considered as only changing the position of the oppressor and the oppressed, by the organization of the original producers of wealth being carried to extremes; for of over-production he appears to have had the utmost dread. In endeavouring to form a medium system of political economy, however, he succeeded only in producing a brilliant theory, which, though it has been the forerunner and type of many kindred systems, has generally been considered as Utopian and impracticable.

His "New Principles of Political Economy," was published at Geneva in the year 1819, and was closely followed by his "Studies on Political Economy."

But it is not on these works that the foundation of his literary fame rests; his historical researches, while they are less likely to lead to discussion of an angry character, will be considered by many readers as of far greater importance.

In the year 1800, when the turbulent spirit excited by the French revolution had somewhat abated, Sismondi returned with his father to Geneva, where important business required his presence, but left his mother and newly married sister at Valchiusa. His recent publications having been favourably regarded by Count Plater, this nobleman offered him the chair of Political Economy at Wilna, with an annual salary equal to £240 of our money. The losses sustained by Sismondi's family through the revolution had reduced him to comparative poverty; his father wished him to accept the appointment, and his mother, though she was silent, expressed by her tears, more forcibly than words could have done, that she coincided with her husband. But Sismondi, preferring the society of those he loved to any pecuniary advantages, declined the offer. He had likewise other motives which influenced him in this determination; his mind was fully occupied by his researches into the history of the Italian republics, and his leisure hours were solaced by the friendship of M. Necker, who still lived, and together with Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and the many Frenchmen of distinction who visited at the château of Coppet, assisted him at once with their advice and encouragement in the prosecution of his literary undertakings.*

About the same time he exercised the functions of secretary to the Chamber of Commerce of the department of Leman, which was then annexed to France.

In the year 1805, after the death of M. Necker, Sismondi made a journey into Italy, accompanied by Madame de Staël. The familiar interchange of two such minds in that land of ruins, and the associations it awoke, must have been interesting in the highest degree. After sojourning for two months at Valchiusa with his mother, he returned to Geneva, where he completed the early volumes of his great work on the Italian republics, which were published in 1807. The results of his labours appeared thirteen years later, in sixteen volumes octavo, and at once stamped the author as one of the first of modern historians.

After the death of his father, which occurred in 1810, Sismondi delivered, in his native city, a course of lectures before a nume-

* Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde. Contemporains Illustres, &c.

rous and attentive audience, "On the Literature of the South of Europe," afterwards revised by the author, and published in Paris in 1813.

This work, a translation of which is now presented to the British public in a form more accessible than heretofore, has contributed not a little to the study of national literature on the continent, where it had been much neglected; and obtained for its author a great accession of popularity both in France and Italy. It was on the occasion of the publication of this work, that M. Sismondi made his first visit to Paris, during which he obtained the friendship of many distinguished men, among others, of M. Guizot, then young, and yet almost unknown to fame.

In 1815, we find him again in Paris, at the same period which marked the return of Napoleon from the Isle of Elba.

The unfavourable decisions of the Congress of Vienna with respect to his own country, had awakened Sismondi's liveliest indignation against the enemies of France, and he readily shared in the enthusiasm of all ranks of Frenchmen at the almost miraculous restoration of their idolized emperor, whose fatal errors were lost sight of, in the brilliancy of his new exploits.

A series of articles which he published in the "Moniteur" in favour of the counter-revolution, attracted the notice of Napoleon, who expressed a wish to converse with their author. M. Sismondi has himself related the particulars of this interview in the form of a letter to his mother, who having but little sympathy with the cause of Buonaparte, was at a loss to understand her son's real motives, and seemed at once surprised and grieved at the line of conduct pursued by him on this occasion.

Having returned into Tuscany, he met at the house of Madame de Sismondi an English lady, Miss Allen, whose personal charms and mental graces made a deep impression on his heart; and in the year 1819, he was induced to visit England, whither she had returned, and where he soon afterwards conducted her to the altar. His stay in England was of no great duration; he settled with his bride at Chênes, a country house near Geneva, which he had inherited from his grandmother.

The domestic happiness which Sismondi here enjoyed was soon

troubled by the death of his beloved parent, in 1821, but he derived some consolation in his irreparable loss, from the composition of the last and most laborious of his works, which occupied the remainder of his life, and crowned his literay fame.

The first volume of his "History of the French," appeared in 1821, and the researches which he found it necessary to make as to the condition of Gaul at the period of the Frankish invasion, inspired him with a desire to depict in a separate work, and in a dramatic form, like Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe, the relations between a vanquished people and its conquerors. This idea was happily realized in his historical romance of "Julia Severa, or the year 492," published in 1822; which, if the form is not altogether regular, is full of the most interesting details.

While engaged in these literary pursuits, Sismondi did not neglect the duties which he owed to his country. Having been elected a member of the Legislative Council of Geneva, he employed his talents in general political affairs, with a success commensurate to his reputation, his general knowledge, and the resources of his active mind. His ardent love of liberty prompted him to lend the aid of his powerful pen in support of the oppressed of all nations; and the patriots of Greece, of Columbia, and of Italy, had reason to be grateful for his labours in their behalf; and even as far as his scanty means extended, his purse was ever open to add to the obligation.*

The moderation of the Revolution of July in France drew from him expressions of the warmest approbation. But his opinion on this subject was afterwards somewhat modified by observing that the French, not satisfied with the advantages which they obtained in the acquisition of a free government, wished for a degree of liberty "greater than had ever been enjoyed by any nation."†

In 1832 Sismondi contributed to Lardner's Cyclopædia an abstract of his "History of the Italian Republics," and at the same time produced a French version of the same work under the title of "The History of the Revival of Liberty in Italy; of its Progress, its Decline, and its Fall."

* Quarterly Review, No. 144. Bossi. Encyclopédie, &c. M. Meunier.

† Contemporains Illustres. Encyclopédie, des Gens du Monde &c.

In 1835 he published simultaneously, in English and French, his "History of the Fall of the Roman Empire, and the Decline of Civilization from the year 250 to 1000;" and in the following year, "Studies on the Constitutions of Free Nations."

The declining years of this illustrious man were disturbed by the events which agitated his country. After travelling with his wife through Italy, and paying a visit to his sister at Pescia, where he wrote an excellent abstract of his "History of the French," which he unfortunately did not live to complete, he returned through Paris to Geneva. Here he found his colleagues in the council, engaged in angry debate.

France demanded the expulsion of Prince Louis Buonaparte from the States of Switzerland. The demand was repugnant to general feeling in the Cantons; and Geneva, in particular, was distinguished by its opposition to the inhospitable measure. M. Sismondi, ever alive to a sense of justice, was convinced of the impropriety, in a friendly state, of harbouring an enemy of their allies, and allowing him to hover on their frontiers, and thus keep the nation in constant danger of a civil war. He did not hesitate to express his opinions to this effect, and thereby incur the penalties of unpopularity and separation from his personal friends.* Though there is no truth in the assertions which have been advanced, that attempts were made on his life, it is certain that violent threats, intended to intimidate him, were made use of, but which neither induced him to change his sentiments nor subdued the firmness of his resolution.

New trials, however, awaited him. The democratic revolution, which broke out in Geneva on the 22d of November, 1841, and which overturned the ancient constitution, filled his soul with grief and bitterness. Already a prey to the cruel disease (a cancer in the stomach), which was to transport him from the scene of his labours, he did not cease to write or speak in the new constituent assembly, of which he had been appointed a member, notwithstanding his known opposition to the opinions entertained by the majority of its members.

On the 25th of June, 1842, his labours and his struggles, his

* Life and Writings of Sismondi. Quarterly Review, &c.

efforts in the cause of literature, and his endeavours to promote the interests of mankind, alike drew towards a close; and the mind which had so long enlightened and instructed his fellow-men was extinguished in this world for ever. A few days before his death he corrected the last proofs of his 29th volume of the "History of the French," which concludes with the reign of Louis XV.

Of the work here presented to the public, it is ably remarked in the "Quarterly Review," that Italy of course occupies the larger portion, and that Italian literature is only to be approached through the literature of Provence. From the professors of the gay science, the Italians received their laws of versification: many of the beauties, and most of the stains and pollutions of Italian poetry are the inheritance derived from the effeminate and profligate Trouhadours. The Provençal portion is exceedingly clever; Sismondi has made the most of the scanty specimens then printed of the materials which abound in the continental libraries. Since his time, Raynouard has brought forth many splendid volumes, but with more show than utility. Like all "elegant extracts," they no more give us a true character of the productions from which they are selected, than leaves, when they are plucked, can do of the tree. The bulk of the work prevented Sismondi from enlarging upon any writers except those of primary importance. His rival is Ginguené: the latter, perhaps, exhibits more research, but it is the research of a book-maker. He weighs you down with extracts, and does not possess the power of giving a clear and general view of the subject. Sismondi, on the contrary, is throughout bright, rapid, and correct. The concluding portion, the view of the literature of his own time, or of the age immediately preceding, in which Metastasio, Goldoni, and Alfieri held a most conspicuous place, is far more satisfactory than can be found in any other book which we can point out. Above all, he has most carefully avoided the approval of the impurities which defile so many portions of Italian literature, whilst Ginguené seems to delight in them. The critics of other nations have not failed to bestow equally high encomiums upon the work now presented to the public.

VIEW OF THE

LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—CORRUPTION OF THE LATIN, AND FORMATION OF THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES.

THE study of foreign literature does not at all times possess the same importance, or the same degree of interest. At the period when nations, yet in their infancy, are animated by a creative genius, which endows them with a poetry and literature of their own, while it renders them, at the same time, capable of splendid enterprises, susceptible of lofty passions, and disposed to great sacrifices, the literature of other nations is unknown to them. Each draws from its own bosom that which best harmonizes with its nature. Eloquence, in such a nation, is the expression of natural sentiment; poetry, the play of an imagination yet unexhausted. Amongst such a people, no one writes for the sake of writing; no one speaks merely for the sake of speaking. To produce a deep impression, there is no need either of rules or examples. The orator touches the inmost soul of his hearer, because his words proceed from the depths of his own heart. The priest obtains a mastery over the conscience, and in turns awakens love or terror, because he is himself convinced of the truth of the dogmas which he inculcates; because he feels the duties he proclaims, and is only the organ of the inspirations within him. The historian places before the eyes of his readers the events of past times, because he is still agitated by the passions which produced them; because the glory of his country is the first passion of his heart;

and because he wishes to preserve by his writings, that which his valour has contributed to acquire. The epic poet adds durability to these historical recollections, by clothing them in a language more conformable to the inspirations of his imagination, and more analogous to those emotions which it is his object to awaken. The lyric poet abandons himself to the transports of which he has so deep a sense; while the tragedian places before our eyes the picture of which his fancy has first formed a perfect conception. Manner and language, to such a creative genius as this, are merely the means of rendering its emotions more popular. Each seeks, and each discovers in himself that harmonious touch, to which all hearts must respond; each affects others, in pursuing only that which affects himself; and art becomes unnecessary, because every thing is supplied by nature and by feeling.

Such was Greece in her infancy; such, perhaps, were the European nations, in their first developement, during the middle ages; and such are all nations which by their native energy rise out of barbarism, and which have not suffered the spirit of imitation to extinguish their natural vigour. At this period of civilization, an acquaintance with foreign languages, with foreign literature, and with foreign rules, cannot but be pernicious. To offer to a people thus gifted with ardent genius, models which they might, perhaps, attempt to imitate, before they are capable of appreciating them, is much to be deprecated. It is better to leave them to themselves. Feeling, with them, takes the lead of judgment, and may conduct them to the highest results; but they are ever ready to abandon it for art, which, while they are entirely unacquainted with it, appears to them to possess superior attractions. They ask with eagerness for rules, while they themselves should be the examples to serve as rules to after-ages. The more vigour the human mind possesses, the more disposed it is to submit itself to authority. It almost always turns its strength against itself; and the first exertion it makes of its power is too often directed to its own extinction. Fanaticism seems to be the malady peculiar to this period of civil society. The vigour of the political or religious institutions which then arise, is proportioned to the energy of the characters which are at the same time developed; and nations endowed with the most powerful faculties, have failed to occupy a place in the history

of the world, or of literature, because they have wasted their best energies in the subjugation of themselves. Many striking examples of this annihilation of the human mind are to be found in the political, and more especially in the religious history of man. The history of literature also presents a few. Thus, the Spartans felt themselves gifted with an extraordinary vigour of character, and passions unusually strong. They were in the full enjoyment of liberty and youth, and for these very reasons they employed the whole energy of their will in subduing themselves. After making themselves acquainted with the most severe codes, like those of the Cretans and the Egyptians, they thought their political labours incomplete, until they had availed themselves of the public liberty to deprive the citizens of all free will. So, also, in the fervour of a recent conversion, the religious feelings display a similar reaction. The monastic orders impose upon themselves more rigorous penances, in proportion to the impetuosity which faith and zeal have awakened in their peculiar character. Thus, too, in that effervescence of soul which produces the poet, we often see young minds abandon the study of truth and of nature, to encumber themselves with the fetters of a refined versification. We find them designedly planning the recurrence of certain words, and the return of rhymes which restrict their thoughts; thus proposing as the ornaments of their composition, the difficulties which they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves, instead of indulging the natural warmth of their imaginations. In the three intellectual occupations which are generally supposed to be so dissimilar, in politics, religion, and poetry, the impetuosity of the human character thus makes itself manifest by the very love of confinement and constraint, and the energy of the mind is seen to react continually upon itself.

The literature of other countries has been frequently adopted by a young nation with a sort of fanatical admiration. The genius of those countries having been so often placed before it as the perfect model of all greatness and of all beauty, every spontaneous movement has been repressed, in order to make room for the most servile imitation, and every national attempt to develope an original character has been sacrificed to the reproduction of something conformable to the model which has been always before its eyes. Thus

the Romans checked themselves in the vigour of their first conceptions, to become emulous copyists of the Greeks; and thus the Arabs placed bounds to their intellectual efforts, that they might rank themselves amongst the disciples of Aristotle. So the Italians in the sixteenth century, and the French in the seventeenth, desirous only of imitating the ancients, did not sufficiently consult, in their poetical attempts, their own religion, manners, and character. And thus, again, the Germans, for a period of no long duration, and the Poles and the Russians to the present day, have repressed their own peculiar spirit, in order to adopt the laws of French literature, and to convert themselves into a nation of imitators and translators.

The period, however, during which the human mind is gifted with this degree of energy, is never of long continuance in any country. Reflection soon succeeds to this vehement effervescence; self-examination takes place, and an enquiry is instituted into the effect of the exertions which have been made. The mind feeds upon its own enthusiastic feelings, which withdraw themselves from the observation of others. All the rules of composition are discovered as the faculty of applying them is lost; the spirit of analysis chills the imagination and the heart, and the soaring flight of genius is at an end. We cannot conceal from ourselves that we have long since arrived at this second period. The mind is no longer ignorant of itself. Its course is foreseen, its effects are calculated upon. Genius has lost its wings and its power, and it is in vain to look, in the present age, for any of those inspired productions, in which genius, instead of speculating upon its own powers, advances towards its goal without nicely enquiring into the consequences, with no rules to confine it, and with no guide but its own native superiority. We have arrived at the age of analysis and philosophy: when every thing is matter of observation, even to the mode of observing, and every thing is governed by rules, even to the art of imposing rules Refinement of intellect has gained the superiority over mere native talent. The latter cannot now advance without the aid of knowledge, which is indispensably requisite in our sentiments, our thoughts, and our conversation. It is necessary to be perpetually comparing ourselves with others, because we are

ourselves always the objects of comparison; it is necessary to learn what is known, not merely for the sake of imitation, but of preserving our own position. When habit, education, and imperfect acquisitions, have already given a certain direction to our minds, we shall follow that beaten track more servilely in proportion to the disadvantages of our situation; and, on the contrary, we shall display more originality in proportion to our acquaintance with every kind of knowledge. The genius of man can never again approach its noble origin, and recover the station which it held before the birth of prejudiees, but by elevating itself sufficiently above them to compare and analyse them all.

To be content with the study of our own literature is to remain in this state of imperfect knowledge. The creators of it were animated with an inspiration which has expired, and they found in their own hearts rules which they never took the trouble of expounding. They produced masterpieces; but we must not confound these masterpieces with models. There are no models but for those who willingly degrade themselves to the wretched condition of imitators. The critics, who succeeded them, discovered in their performances the course most appropriate to their genius, and perhaps to the national genius of the French. They indicated the path by which these great intellects arrived at such extraordinary results, and shewed that any other route would have diverted them from their object. They pointed out the conventional rules which had been observed, and which they have thus rendered essential, in the judgment of the public, for whose benefit they laboured. They have made us acquainted with our prejudices, and they have, at the same time, confirmed us in them. These prejudices are legitimate. They are derived from the authority of our greatest authors. We need only guard ourselves against supposing that these rules are essentially necessary to the productions of the human mind. Other great authors are found in other languages; they have formed the ornaments of the literature of other nations; they, too, have swayed the passions, and produced the same effects, which we are accustomed to consider as the consequences of our own eloquence and poetry. Let us study their manners; let us estimate them not by our own rules, but by those to which they

themselves conformed. Let us learn to distinguish the genius of man from the genius of nations, and to raise ourselves to that height whence we may distinguish the rules which are derived from the essential principles of beauty, and which are common to all languages, from those which are adopted from great examples, which custom has sanctioned, refinement justified, and propriety still upholds; but which may, notwithstanding, amongst other nations, give place to other rules, depending upon other notions of propriety and other customs, sanctioned by other examples, and approved by the test of another, and, perhaps, not less perfect mode of analysis.

It will, therefore, be both useful and interesting to take a review of the modern literature of other countries; to examine its early origin amongst the various nations of Europe; the spirit which animated it, and the different masterpieces which it has produced. In order to render a course like this complete, an extent of knowledge, and a familiar acquaintance with languages, would, no doubt, be necessary, to which I am far from making any pretensions. I am ignorant of the Oriental languages, and yet it was the Arabian which, in the middle ages, gave a new impulse to the literature of Europe, and changed the course of the human mind. I am ignorant, likewise, of the Sclavonic tongues, and yet the Russian and the Polish boast of literary treasures, a brief account of which I could present to my readers only on the authority of others. Amongst the Teutonic languages I am acquainted with the English and the German alone; and the literature of Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, is only accessible to me in an imperfect manner, through the medium of German translations. Still, the languages of which I shall give a summary account, are those in which there exist the greatest number of masterpieces, and which at the same time possess the most original and novel spirit; and, indeed, even with these restrictions, the ground which I intend to traverse is still sufficiently extensive.

I shall divide modern literature into two classes, which I shall make the subject of two courses: one on the Romance, the other on the Teutonic languages. In the first, after casting a glance over the brilliant period of Arabian literature, I shall successively take a review of the nations of the

South who formed their poetry in the Oriental schools; and, first of all, the Provençals, who first introduced the poetry of romance into Europe. I shall endeavour to render my readers acquainted with their Troubadours, so renowned and yet so neglected, and to prove how much the poets of all modern ages owe to these, their earliest masters. At the same time I shall take the opportunity of speaking of the Trouveurs, the poets of the country to the north of the Loire, from whom Europe derives her *Fabliaux*, her chivalric romances, and her earliest dramatic representations. From their language, the Romance *Wallon*, or *langue d'oil*, the French was afterwards formed. After these dead, though modern languages, I shall give some account of the literature of Italy, which, amongst all the languages of the South, has exercised the greatest influence over the rest. I shall take it up from its origin about the time of Dante, and shall continue it down to our own times. In the same manner I shall treat of the literature of Spain, of which the earliest remains are anterior, by more than a century, to the first Italian poets, although in the reign of Charles V. the Castilians attempted to imitate the great models which they had learned to value in Italy. We ought, however, to rank the nations, not according to the antiquity of their first attempts, but by the influence which the cultivation of each has exercised over the others. The course will be concluded by the literature of Portugal, with which, perhaps, the majority of my readers are only acquainted through the masterpiece of Camoens, but which, in fact, could not have produced so great a writer, without at the same time possessing many distinguished poets and historians worthy of partaking his fame.

I intend in the same manner to take a view, in my second course, of the literature of England and Germany, and to make some observations on that of the other Teutonic nations, as well as on that of the nations descended from the Sclavonians, the Poles, and the Russians.

In the execution of a design so extensive, and so much beyond the capacity of a single individual, I shall not have the presumption to affect originality. I shall eagerly avail myself of the labours of the critics and literary historians; and I shall, occasionally, be under the necessity of borrowing from them their opinions on works which I have not myself

read, and which I can do no more than point out to the attention of my readers.* But as I have proposed rather to make the reader acquainted with the masterpieces of foreign languages, than to pass a judgment upon them according to arbitrary rules, or to give the history of their authors, I have had recourse to the originals as often as it was in my power, and whenever their reputation seemed to render them worthy of examination ; and it is my intention rather to extract and give translations of the most beautiful

* I am only acquainted with two works which comprehend that portion of literary history of which I purpose to treat in this course. The first, the plan of which is very extensive, is that of Andres, a Spanish Jesuit, and professor at Mantua, *Dell' Origine e de' Progressi d' ogni Letteratura*, 5 vols. 4to, Parma, 1782. The author has sketched the history of all human sciences in every language and in all parts of the world ; and with wonderful erudition has traced, in a philosophical manner, the progress of the human mind. But as he has not given any examples, and has not analysed the peculiar tastes of each nation, and as his rapid judgments do not always contain the grounds of his decision, he has not succeeded in giving a clear idea of the writers and works of which he has collected the names, nor does he enable his readers to form their own opinions. There is much more practical instruction to be found in the work of Professor Boutterwek, of Gottingen, who is employed upon the History of Literature, properly so called, in Modern Europe. (*Friedrich Boutterwek, Geschichte der Schonen Wissenschaften*, 8 vols. 8vo, 1801—1810.) As yet he has only compiled the literary history of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and England; but he has executed his task with an extent of erudition, and with a regard to the instruction of his readers, which seem peculiar to the German writers. I am more indebted to this than to any other critical work. For the particular history of each language I have possessed still more ample resources. Millot (*Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*) has been my principal guide in Provençal literature ; Tiraboschi, and in the first three volumes of his excellent work, M. Ginguené, in Italian ; Nicolas Antonio, Velasquez, with the Commentary of Dieze, and Diogo Barbosa, in Spanish and Portuguese ; and Aug. W. Schlegel, in the dramatic literature of every nation. I here beg to acknowledge generally my obligations to all these critics, because in a work from necessity of so condensed a character, and composed to be read as lectures, I have frequently availed myself of their labours, and sometimes even of their thoughts, without citing them. If I had wished, as in an historical work, to produce my authorities for every fact and opinion, it would have been necessary to have added notes to almost every line, and to have suspended, in a fatiguing manner, the delivery of the lecture, or the attention of the audience. In critical history it would be ridiculous to attempt never to repeat what has been said before ; and to endeavour to separate, in every sentence, what belongs to ourselves from what is the property of others, would be little better than vanity and affectation.

pieces I can collect in the languages of the South, than to detail the doubtful opinions of the critics.

The languages which are spoken by the inhabitants of the south of Europe, from the extremity of Portugal to that of Calabria or Sicily, and which usually receive the designation of the Romance languages, are all derived from the mixture of the Latin with the Teutonic; of the people who were accounted Romans, with the barbarous nations which overthrew the Empire of Rome. The diversities which exist amongst the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Provençal, the French, and the Italian, arise rather from accidental circumstances than from any distinction between these different races of men. Each of these tongues is founded upon the Latin, but the form is often barbarous. A great number of the words were introduced into the language by the conquerors, but by far the greater number belong to the vanquished people. The grammar was formed by mutual concessions. More complicated than that of the purely Teutonic nations, and more simple than that of the Greeks and Romans, it has not, in any of the languages of the South, preserved the cases in the nouns; but making a selection amongst the varying terminations of the Latin, it has created a new word from the nominative for the Italian, and from the accusative for the Spanish, while for the French it has contracted the word, and varied it from both of those terminations.* This original diversity gives a peculiar character

* This rule more especially applies to the plural. The following are a few examples of these contractions:—

Lat.	*Ital.*	*Span.*	*Portug.*	*Proven.*	*French.*
Oculi	ocehi	ojos	oilhos	huelhs	yeux (œils)
Cœli	cieli	cielos	ceos	ceus	cieux
Gaudium	godimento / gioia	gozo	gozo	gaug	joie

Since the publication of this work, M. Raynouard, in the grammar prefixed to his *Choix des Poésies originales des Troubadours*, has shown, that in their language the nouns were formed from Latin substantives, by depriving them of those characteristic terminations which marked the cases; for the barbarians, ignorant of the declensions and the rules of grammar, did not know how to employ them. The termination of *the accusative* was most frequently cut off: thus, *abbatem* became *abbat; infantem, infant; florem, flor.* The examples of this methodical contraction, which M. Raynouard has collected, are to be found in abundance long before the year 1000; and as this first modification

to each language; but it does not prevent us from recognising the common source of all. On the borders of the Danube, the Wallachians and the Bulgarians speak also a language which may be known as a descendant of the Latin, and which its great resemblance to the Italian renders easy to be comprehended. Of the two elements of which it is composed, it has one in common with the Italian—the Latin; the other is entirely different—the Sclavonic instead of the German.

The Teutonic languages themselves are not absolutely exempt from this primitive mixture. Thus the English, which is for the most part a corrupt German dialect, has been mingled partly with the Breton or Gaelic, and partly with the French, which has given it some analogy to the Romance languages. Its character bears a greater impress of harshness than the German; its grammar is more simple, and it might be said more barbarous, if the cultivation which this language has subsequently received, had not educed new beauties even from that very circumstance. The German has not remained what it was, when it was spoken by the people who overthrew the Roman empire. It appears to have borrowed for a period, and afterwards to have lost, a portion of the Latin syntax. When the study of letters began to extend itself over the North, with Christianity, the Germans attempted to give each case of their nouns a different termination, as in the Latin. This rendered their language more sonorous, and admitted more vowels in the construction of their words; but these modifications, which were, no doubt, contrary to the genius of the people, were in the end abandoned, and this distinction between the German and the Latin was again restored.

Thus, from one end of Europe to the other, the encounter of two mighty nations, and the mixture of two mother tongues, confounded all the dialects, and gave rise to new

of the Latin is at the same time the most natural and methodical, he concludes not only that the Romance language of the Troubadours is of a date anterior to all the others, but that it was common, in its orgin, to all the nations which abandoned the use of the Latin, and that it was not until long afterwards that it was split into various dialects. He supposes, too, that all the other languages of the South were formed immediately from this.

ones in their place. A long period of time now elapsed, during which it might almost be supposed that the nations of Europe were without a language. From the fifth to the tenth century, various races, always new, were mingled, without being confounded. Each village, each hamlet, contained some Teutonic conqueror, with his barbarian soldiers, and a number of vassals, the remains of the vanquished people. The terms upon which they lived, were those of contempt on the one side and hatred on the other. There was no confidence or trust between them. Equally ignorant of every principle of general grammar, they never thought of studying the language of their enemies; but accustomed themselves, merely, to the mutual jargon in which they sought to carry on an intercourse. Thus, we still see individuals transported into a foreign country, forming with those, with whom it is necessary to communicate, a sort of conventional dialect, which is neither their own language nor that of the natives, yet which is comprehended by both, and prevents each from becoming acquainted with the language of the other. Amongst the slaves of Africa and Constantinople, there are Christians, from every part of Europe, mingled with the Moors, who have neither taught the latter their language, nor have themselves acquired the Moorish. They communicate with them in a rude language, called the *Lingua Franca*, which is composed of the most useful European words, despoiled of the terminations which mark the tenses and the cases, and thrown together without any syntax. Thus, also, in the colonies of America, the planters make themselves intelligible to the Negroes by using the Creole language, which is nothing more than the French, adapted to the capacity of a barbarous people, by depriving it of every thing which gives it its precision, force, and pliancy. The want of ideas, the consequence of universal ignorance, left no temptation to augment the number of words of which this jargon was composed, and the absence of communication between village and village deprived it of all uniformity. The continual revolutions which led new nations of barbarians to usurp the place of the former intruders, and which substituted the new dialects of Germany for those with which the people of the South had begun to be familiar, did not suffer the language to acquire any degree of stability. In short, this

unformed dialect, which varied with each province and each colony, which changed from year to year, and in which the only rules were imposed by chance or by the caprice of a barbarian people, was never used as a written language, even by the small number of those who were acquainted with the art of writing. It was disdained, as the language of ignorance and barbarism, by all who had the power of polishing it; and the gift of speech, which was granted to man for the purpose of extending and enlightening his ideas by communication, multiplied the barriers which before existed between them, and was only a source of confusion.

During the five centuries which preceded and prepared the way for the rise of the modern languages, it was impossible for Europe to possess any literature. Amongst those barbarous nations, the number of individuals who possessed the talent of reading or writing was small, and indeed the very materials for writing were wanting. Parchment was enormously dear; the Egyptian papyrus, after the victories of the Arabians, had ceased to be imported into Europe; and paper was not yet invented, or had not been introduced by commerce into the West. To tradition alone was committed the preservation of past events; and in order to engrave them on the memory, a metrical form was naturally given them. Such, perhaps, was the origin of versification. Poetry was, at first, nothing more than a mode of assisting the memory. But, amongst the nations of the South, the language which had recently been formed, was confined within very narrow limits. It was too variable to be entrusted with any thing, which was intended to reach another generation. It sufficed, at the utmost, for the purpose of giving and receiving orders, and for the rude communication between the conqueror and the conquered. But as soon as it was desirable to make themselves intelligible at a distant period or in another country, the nations endeavoured to express themselves in the Latin, which, however, they could not effect without difficulty. All the rude chronicles, in which passing events were, at distant intervals, registered, were written in Latin. All contracts of marriage, or of purchase, lending, or exchange, were in the same tongue, or rather in that barbarous jargon which the notaries supposed to be Latin, but which was in fact as far removed from the spoken as from the written

language. The excessive price of parchment for their manuscripts compelled them to cover the margins of ancient books with their barbarous contracts, and they often erased the most sublime works of Greece or Rome, for the purpose of substituting some private agreement, or some legendary absurdity.*

Amongst all the Romance nations, however, and more especially in France and Italy, there appeared at distant periods during these five centuries, some judicious historians, whose style possesses considerable vivacity, and who have given animated pictures of their times ; some subtle philosophers, who astonish us rather by the fineness of their speculations than by the justice of their reasoning ; some learned theologians, and some poets. The names of Paul Warnefrid, of Alcuin, of Liutprand, and of Eginhard, are even yet universally respected. They all, however, wrote in Latin. They had all of them, by the strength of their intellect, and the happy circumstances in which they were placed, learned to appreciate the beauty of the models which antiquity had left them. They breathed the spirit of a former age, as they had adopted its language. In them we do not find the representatives of their contemporaries. It is impossible to recognise, in their style, the times in which they lived ; it only betrays the relative industry and felicity with which they imitated the language and the thoughts of a former age. They do not belong to modern literature. They were the last monuments of civilized antiquity ; the last of a noble race, which, after a long period of degeneracy, became extinct in them.

The popular songs and ballads of every country, which are the genuine productions of their own age, and belong not to antiquity, are the most curious specimens we possess of

* The price of parchment compelled our ancestors to observe a singular economy of words; in the archives of the Tower of London, we see, in the *Rolls of Fines*, that each contract for sale of lands is always comprised in a single line; and from the eighth to the tenth century, all annals of the Franks, written in the Convents, followed the same rule ; whatever the number or importance of events, the same annalist was bound not to exceed the line for each year. It is easy to be conceived that men so chary of their parchment could find little room for poetry.

national compositions. Some of these songs, which have been preserved by chance, are well worthy of observation, much less for their poetical merit, than for the light which they throw on the strange destruction of national language. They are all of them written in barbarous Latin, and none of them have been discovered in those dialects, which were soon afterwards destined to assume the rank of new languages. Those dialects were scarcely intelligible from town to town; and the poet, for the sake of popularity, had recourse to a language which was generally, though imperfectly known, in preference to that vulgar tongue which would scarcely have been understood beyond the next village. It is not singular that the hymns of the Church should have been composed at this period in Latin, for that was the language of religion; nor that the learned should frame their poems in the same tongue, for it was the language of study; but, that the songs of the soldiers should have been composed in Latin, shews the impossibility at that time of employing any other medium.

One of these songs was composed in Italy in 871, by the soldiers of the Emperor Louis II. to excite a mutual emulation amongst them to rescue him from his captivity. That monarch, who had been engaged, in the south of Italy, in a war against the Saracens, had become a greater burden to his ally, Adelgizo, Duke of Benevento, than even the enemies whom he had come to repel. Adelgizo, no longer able to endure the exactions and insolence of the army which he had received within his walls, took the rash resolution of arresting the Emperor in his palace, on the 25th June, 871. He was kept in captivity for nearly three months, when the Imperial soldiers, who were scattered throughout all Italy, animating themselves to vengeance by the song which I am about to transcribe, advanced towards the duchy of Benevento, which induced Adelgizo to set his prisoner at liberty. This poem is written in long lines of fifteen or sixteen syllables, without any apparent regard to quantity, but with a cæsura in the middle. The sense terminates at the end of every three lines. It is composed in a barbarous Latin, in which may be found examples of every grammatical error. A translation is subjoined :—

* "Listen, all ye boundaries of the earth! listen with horrow and sadness, to the crime which has been committed in the city of Benevento. Louis, the holy, the pious Augustus, has been seized. The Beneventines were assembled in council, Adalferio spoke, and they said to the prince, 'If we dismiss him alive, we shall assuredly perish. He has planned a cruel design against this province; he has deprived us of our kingdom; he holds us cheap; he has heaped many evils upon us; it is just that he should die.' They have led this holy saint from his palace; Adalferio has led him to his judgment seat; but he rejoices as a saint in his martyrdom. Sado and Saducto have departed, invoking the rights of the Empire. And now the holy saint himself speaks: 'You

* The following is the text of this barbarous poem, of which I am not sure that I have always discovered the right sense:

Audite omnes fines terre orrore cum tristitia,
Quale scelus fuit factum Benevento civitas,
Lhuduicum comprenderunt, sancto pio Augusto.
Beneventani se adunarunt ad unum Consilium,
Adalferio loquebatur et dicebant Principi:
Si nos eum vivum dimittemus, certe nos peribimus.
Celus magnum preparavit in istam provintiam,
Regnum nostrum nobis tollit, nos habet pro nihilum,
Plures mala nobis fecit, rectum est ut moriad.
Deposuerunt sancto pio de suo palatio;
Adalferio illum ducebat usque ad Pretorium,
Ille vero gaude visum tanquam ad martyrium.
Exierunt Sado et Saducto, invocabant imperio;
Et ipse sancte pius incipiebat dicere:
Tanquam ad latronem venistis cum gladiis et fustibus.
Fuit jam namque tempus vos allevavit in omnibus,
Modo vero surrexistis adversus me consilium,
Nescio pro quid causam vultis me occidere.
Generacio crudelis veni interficere,
Eclesie que sanctis Dei venio diligere,
Sanguine veni vindicare quod super terram fusus est.
Kalidus ille temtator, ratum adque nomine
Coronam Imperii sibi in caput ponent et dicebat Populo:
Ecce sumus Imperator, possum vobis regere.
Leto animo habebat de illo quo fecerat;
A demonio vexatur, ad terram ceciderat,
Exierunt multæ turmæ videre mirabilia.
Magnus Dominus Jesus Christus judicavit judicium
Multa gens paganorum exit in Calabria,
Super Salerno pervenerunt, possidere civitas.
Juratum est ad Sancte Dei reliquie
Ipse regnum defendendum, et alium requirere

have come against me with swords and with clubs, as though I were a robber. The time was, when I brought you relief, but now you have taken counsel against me, and yet I know not wherefore you would slay me. I came hither to destroy a cruel generation ; I came to worship in the church of God, and to avenge the blood which has been shed upon the earth.' The Tempter has dared to place upon his head the Imperial Crown, and he has said to the people, 'Behold, we are the Emperor, and we will rule you,' and he rejoiced in the work he had done. But the Demon torments him, and has cast him to the earth, and the people have gone forth to behold the miracle. Our great master, Jesus Christ, has pronounced judgment. A crowd of Pagans have invaded Calabria, they have arrived at Salerno, they have possessed the city ; but we have sworn by the holy relics of God to defend this kingdom, and to conquer another."

Another military song has been preserved, later than the former by nearly a century. It was composed about the year 924, to be sung by the Modenese soldiers as they guarded their walls against the Hungarians. The Latin is more grammatical, and the language altogether more correct, than that of the former. It appears to have been the production of a man conversant with antiquity; and yet it approaches more nearly to the style of modern poetry, which was then near its birth. The lines, which consist of twelve syllables, are unequally divided by a cæsura after the fifth. They are all rhymed ; or rather, as in Spanish poetry, the rhyme only exists in the terminating vowel, and is continued throughout the whole piece.

* "O thou! who with thine arms guardest these walls, sleep not, I warn thee, but watch. As long as Hector

* The text is as follows :—

O tu qui servas armis ista mœnia
Noli dormire, moneo, sed vigila !
Dum Hector vigil extitit in Troia
Non eam cepit fraudulenta Græcia.
Prima quiete dormiente Troia
Laxavit Sinon fallax claustra perfida :
Per funem lapsa occultata agmina
Invadunt urbem et incendunt Pergama.
Vigili voce avis anser candida
Fugavit Gallos ex arce Romulea,

watched in Troy, the crafty Greeks could not capture it; but when she sunk into her first slumbers, the treacherous Sinon opened the perfidious gates, and the hidden bands, gliding down the ropes, seized on the city and burnt Pergama. The watchful voice of the white goose put to flight the Gauls who attacked the Roman Capitol; wherefore, for that deed, a silver bird was fashioned, and adored as a divinity by the Romans. Let us adore the Godhead of Christ, let us sing for him our songs of jubilee. Relying on his powerful guard, let us watch and sing our songs of jubilee. O Christ, king of the world, take into thy powerful keeping these camps in which we watch. Be thou our impregnable rampart, be thou the terrible enemy of our enemies. No force can hurt us while thou keepest guard, for thou puttest to flight the armies of the warlike. Do thou, O Christ, gird in our walls, do thou defend them with thy powerful lance. And thou, Maria, holy and bright mother of Christ, do thou beseech his assistance for us, with John, whose holy relics we here worship, and to whom these walls are dedicated. Under his

Pro qua virtute facta est argentea,
Et a Romanis adorata ut Dea.
Nos adoremus celsa Christi numina,
Illi canora demus nostra jubila;
Illius magna fisi sub custodia
Hæe vigilantes jubilemus carmina.
Divina mundi Rex Christe custodia.
Sub tua serva hæc castra vigilia,
Tu murus tuis sis inexpugnabilis,
Sis inimicis hostis tu terribilis;
Te vigilante nulla nocet fortia,
Qui cuncta fugas procul arma bellica.
Cinge hæc nostra tu Christe munimina
Defendens ea tua forti lancea.
Sancta Maria mater Christi splendida,
Hæc cum Johanne Theotocos impetra,
Quorum hic sancta veneramur pignora,
Et quibus ista sunt sacrata mœnia,
Quo duce victrix est in bello dextera
Et sine ipso nihil valent jacula.
Fortis juventus, virtus audax bellica,
Vestra per muros audiantur carmina:
Et sit in armis alterna vigilia,
Ne fraus hostilis hæc invadat mœnia;
Resultet echo comes: eja vigila.
er muros eja! dicat echo vigila!

conduct, our right hand shall be victorious in war, and without him our javelins avail not. Valiant youth! bold glory of war! let your songs be heard along the walls; and in our alternate vigils, lest hostile treachery should invade our walls, Echo, our comrade, shall repeat our shout, 'Ho! watch!' and Echo along the walls shall cry 'Watch!'"

These popular songs are not altogether destitute of eloquence, nor of a certain sort of poetry. They possess much more life and animation than many of the poems, which the scholars of those times attempted to compose in imitation of the ancients. Literature, however, must be at a low ebb in a nation, when it is necessary, even in its popular songs, to make use of a foreign language.

But at this very time, and in the heart of these very nations, another class of poetry was to be found—the poetry of the conquerors. The people of the North, who possessed a language of their own, which they were confident would continue to exist beyond their own times, and who looked forward to the respect which their posterity would pay to their memory, had yet traditions amongst them, if they could not boast of a written poetry. The most important dogmas of their faith, and the most brilliant events of their history, supplied them with materials for their songs, which were preserved by oral traditions. These poems kept alive that love of glory, that enthusiastic admiration of great actions, that vivacity of imagination, and that belief in the marvellous, which inspired the whole nation with poetical feelings, imposed upon the heroic the duty of seeking adventures, and sowed the seeds of that chivalrous spirit which was developed at a later period. We meet, in history, traces of these songs, which the northern nations carried with them, as though they were a part of their inheritance, into the conquered countries. The victors, however, speedily forgot, amongst their vassals, the language of their fathers, which was not preserved by any regular system of instruction. In two or three generations, these patriotic songs, being forgotten in the South, were only preserved amongst the Northern nations. Charlegmagne, who was tenacious of the glory of his family, on the representation of Eginhard, caused these songs, which shed so much glory on the memory of his ancestors, to be collected. Louis le Debonnaire, his son, endeavoured, on

the other hand, to consign them to oblivion. The Germans, in our time, have discovered an epic poem of the first class, the composition of which they date as far back as the first conquest of the Roman empire by the Barbarians—the Lay of the Nibelungen. The scene is laid at the court of Attila, the king of the Huns, about the year 430 or 440. The subject is the destruction of the race of the Burgundians, who served in the army of that monarch, and were sacrificed to the vengeance of one of his wives. This woman, herself a Burgundian, drew down this calamity upon her nation, in order to avenge the murder of her first husband, who had been put to death, a considerable time before, by his brothers. Amongst the other heroes who figure in this epic, we find Dietrich von Bern, or Theodoric the Great, the founder of the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy; Siegfried, or Sigefroi, who appears to have been one of the ancestors of the French monarchs of the first race; a Margrave Ruddiger, the ancestor of the first house of Austria; and, in short, the heads of all the conquering dynasties which overturned the Roman empire. The events of this poem are historical, and are related with so much truth, and with such knowledge of the manners which prevailed at the court of Attila, that the poem could not have been written at a period very distant from these transactions. The Lay of the Nibelungen has probably existed since the age which immediately followed that of Attila; perhaps it was one of those compositions which owe their preservation to Charlemagne. Unfortunately, we do not possess it in its antique and original form. Retouched, at different periods, in order to make it conform to the variations in the language, and to gratify by interpolations the pride of new families, it assumed its present shape only about the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. We shall again refer to this poem, when we treat of the literature of Germany.

It is not easy to assign the exact period, when the German language was abandoned by the conquerors in the south of Europe. In all probability, it was still preserved at the courts of the sovereigns, and in the assemblies of the nations, long after the feudatories, who had retired to their castles and were compelled to hold a communication with the peasantry, had relinquished the use of it. Thus the names of

the Lombard kings, in the seventh and eighth centuries, and even of the Dukes of Benevento, in the ninth, indicate a knowledge of the German language, which, at all events, was kept alive at court, whilst all the laws and acts, even of these monarchs, were written in Latin, and the vulgar language of the people was already a Romance dialect. The laws of the Visigoths in Spain, and the mixture of German words with the Latin text, afford room for the same remark. Charlemagne and all his court spoke German, whilst the Romance was, very generally, the dialect of the people throughout all the south of France. Nothing can give a more correct idea of the mode in which a new language is thus formed, by a barbarous nation who inherit the institutions of a civilized people, than the process which we see, at the present day, taking place at St. Domingo. There, the French is what the Latin was in Europe till the eighth century; the African languages are the Teutonic dialects; and the Creole is the Romance. If, in future times, the Creole should become a polished language, abounding in orators and poets, its history in these times will present the same obscurity and the same contradictions which perplex us with regard to the origin of the Romance. We see, in like manner, in St. Domingo, the Jaloff, the Mandingo, and the other African languages, abandoned by the conquerors, whose mother-tongues they are, the Creole universally employed without being written, and the French reserved for the acts of government, its proclamations, and its journals.

It is thus that barbarian invasions, the misery of the people, slavery, civil wars, and all the evils which can afflict society, had destroyed the Latin language and corrupted the German. The most fertile lands, after the massacre of their inhabitants, had become the retreats of wolves and wild-boars; the rivers had overflowed their banks, and converted the plains into marshes; the forests, spreading from the mountains, had covered the face of the country; a few wandering inhabitants, of different races, traversing these vast deserts, fearing and flying from one another, and only meeting in combat, could not preserve any common language. But when the barbarians, as their dominion acquired stability, began to regard as their country the territories

which they had conquered, and when they defended their frontiers and cultivated the soil, order was at length restored, and population followed in its train. A few generations filled the immense void which tyranny, war, famine, and pestilence had created. The dawn of more prosperous days appeared with the reign of Charlemagne and his successors. These happy prospects, it is true, were disturbed by new barbarian invasions of Normans, Saracens, and Hungarians; but, notwithstanding their devastations, the inhabitants of these countries continued to acquire fresh strength. They rallied in their own defence; they inclosed their towns, their hamlets, and their castles, with walls; they promised one another mutual succour; and their intercourse, becoming frequent, induced them to polish their language. At this time, in the tenth century, it is probable that the languages, which are now spread over the south of Europe, had their origin. During the period which preceded this event, we only recognise two mother-tongues, and the rude progeny which arose from their admixture. As soon as the dialects were separated, they assumed a regular form, even before the languages from which they were derived. Every district, every town, almost every village, had a dialect peculiar to itself, which the inhabitants endeavoured to speak with purity, and to preserve without mixture. In the countries in which these dialects prevailed, their peculiarities are still strongly marked. The Lombards of Milan do not speak the same dialect as the Lombards of Pavia or Lodi, as an experienced ear will immediately discover. Even in Tuscany, where the language is so pure, the dialects of Florence, of Pisa, of Sienna, and of Lucca, are easily distinguishable. In Spain, independently of the Catalan and the Gallician, which are different languages, there is a clear distinction between the languages of Aragon and Castile, and between the latter and that of Andalusia. In those countries which have distinguished their dialect by the name of the Romance, the same differences were formerly very discernible between the *patois* of Savoy and of Switzerland; but this language having been abandoned for the French by the well-educated classes, the lower orders, by the frequent communication between the two countries, have confounded the dialects, which have thus lost their primitive and local originality.

In former times, that spirit of aggregation and association, which is the consequence of long weakness and of the urgent necessity of uniting for the purpose of resisting aggression, was the means of retaining every family within their native town or village, and every individual within his own family. The countrymen, during the day, went armed to their fields, and at night fortified themselves in their hamlets. They avoided all communication, even by speech, with the neighbouring districts; the inhabitants of which they regarded as enemies. They never united themselves in marriage with them, and they considered all travelling amongst them as dangerous. In fact, since the slightest private injury might give rise to a state of warfare, it was an imprudent step, in any one, to connect himself, by ties of relationship or property, with his neighbours, who might at any moment become his enemies, and render him the sudden victim of an unexpected quarrel, in which he had no personal share. Thus these races were renewed by constant intermarriages amongst themselves, and sometimes for several generations. Whilst the inhabitants of a village were, perhaps, originally descended from Romans, Greeks, Etruscans, Goths, Lombards, Hungarians, Sclavonians, and Alains the individuals, thus assembled from the very extremities of the earth, were so well amalgamated by the process of time into one family, that they regarded as strangers all who were born a few miles from themselves; and differed from all the other inhabitants of the country in opinions, manners, costume, and language. This spirit of association has, doubtless, contributed to produce the curious phenomenon, which is observable on the frontiers of the two countries, where the mother-tongues were spoken. The transition from the German to the Romance is as abrupt, as if the two nations had been separated by hundreds of miles. The inhabitants of one village do not understand their neighbours; and there are some, like Fribourg and Morat in Switzerland, where the two races, having accidentally been reunited, have yet never mingled together. They have lived for ages in the same town, without the one ever passing into the quarter occupied by the other, and without the power of making themselves mutually intelligible.

Some of the towns, nevertheless, and some of the provinces,

protected by a more firm and just government, succeeded, before the rest, in enlarging the boundaries of what was considered, by their inhabitants, as their country. They forgot their local interests in those of the state, and they abandoned the dialect of their hamlets for the more extended language of the whole community. In this manner arose the first polished languages of Europe. The reign of Bozon, the founder of the kingdom of Arles, may, perhaps, be considered as indicating this happy epoch in the Provençal, which thus advanced before the other languages of Europe. The dukes of Normandy, the successors of Rollo, in the tenth and twelfth centuries, appear to have favoured the birth of the French or Romance-Wallon. The reign of Ferdinand the Great, and the exploits of the Cid, in the eleventh century, by exciting national enthusiasm, formed, in the same manner, a rallying point for the Castilian language, and merged the dialects of the villages in the language of the court and the army. Henry, the founder of the Portuguese monarchy, and his son Alfonso, towards the end of the eleventh century, produced the same benefits in Portugal by their rapid conquests. The birth of the Italian may be referred to a later date, although the way had been prepared for it by the wise and beneficent administration of the dukes of Benevento. It was only at the Sicilian court, in the twelfth century, that this language, which was previously merely a rude dialect, was subjected to the rules of grammar.*

* In referring the birth of each language to the reign in which each nation appears to have attained a stable character, the Romance languages will stand in the following order:—

The Provençal, at the court of Bozon, King of Arles	877	887
The Langue d'Oil, or d'Oui, or the Romanee-Wallon or French, at that of William Longue-Epee, the son of Rollo duke of Normandy	917	943
The Castilian, in the reign of Ferdinand the Great	1037	1065
The Portuguese, under Henry the founder of the monarchy	1095	1112
The Italian, under Roger I. King of Sicily	1129	1154

CHAPTER II.

ON THE LITERATURE OF THE ARABIANS.

The Western world had now sunk into barbarism, and population and riches had disappeared. The inhabitants, who were thinly scattered over those vast countries, found full occupation in struggling against the perpetual recurrence of evils, the invasion of barbarians, civil wars, and feudal tyranny. With difficulty did they preserve their lives, ever menaced by famine or the sword; and, in this constant state of violence or fear, there was little leisure left for intellectual enjoyments. It was impossible that eloquence should exist, deprived of its proper objects. Poetry was unknown, and philosophy was proscribed as a rebellion against religion. Even their very language was destroyed. Barbarous and provincial dialects had usurped the place of that beautiful Latin language, which had so long connected the nations of the West, and which had preserved to them so many treasures of thought and taste. But, at this very period, a new nation, which, by its conquests and its fanaticism, had contributed more than any other to abolish the cultivation of science and literature, having at length established its empire, in its turn devoted itself to letters. Masters of a great portion of the East; of the country of the Magi and the Chaldeans, whence the first light of knowledge had shone over the world; of the fertile Egypt, the storehouse of human science; of Asia Minor, that smiling land, where poetry and taste and the fine arts had their birth; and of the burning plains of Africa, the country of impetuous eloquence and subtle intellect; the Arabians seemed to unite in themselves the advantages of all the nations which they had thus subjugated. Their success in arms had been sufficient to satiate even the most unmeasured ambition. The East and Africa, from their respective extremities, had yielded to the empire of the Caliphs; innumerable treasures had been the fruit of their conquests; and the Arabians

before that time a rude and uncultivated nation, now began to indulge in the most unbounded luxury. With the conquest of those happy countries, over which pleasure had so long held sway, the spirit of voluptuousness was naturally introduced among them. With all the delights which human industry, quickened by boundless riches, can procure, with all that can flatter the senses, and attach the heart to life, the Arabians attempted to mingle the pleasures of the intellect, the cultivation of the arts and sciences, and all that is most excellent in human knowledge--the gratifications of the mind, and the imagination. In this new career, their conquests were not less rapid than they had been in the field, nor was the empire which they founded less extended. With a celerity equally surprising, it rose to as gigantic a height. It rested, however, on a foundation no less insecure, and it was quite as transitory in its duration.

The flight of Mahomet from Mecca to Medina, which is styled the Hegira, corresponds with the year 622 of our æra; and the pretended burning of the library of Alexandria by Amrou, the general of the Caliph Omar, with the year 641. This is the period of the deepest barbarism amongst the Saracens; and this event, doubtful as it is, has left a melancholy proof of their contempt for letters. A century had scarcely elapsed from the period to which this barbarian outrage is referred, when the family of the Abassides, who mounted the throne of the Caliphs in 750, introduced a passionate love of art, of science, and of poetry. In the literature of Greece, nearly eight centuries of progressive cultivation, succeeding the Trojan war, (from 1209 B. C. to 431) had prepared the way for the age of Pericles. In that of Rome, the age of Augustus was, also, in the eighth century after the foundation of the city. In French literature, the age of Louis XIV. was twelve centuries subsequent to Clovis, and eight, after the developement of the first rudiments of the Romance language, or French. But in the rapid progress of the Arabian empire, the age of Al-Mamoun, the father of letters and the Augustus of Bagdad, was not removed more than one hundred and fifty years from the first foundation of the monarchy.

All the literature of the Arabians bears the marks of this rapid progression; and that of modern Europe, which was formed in their school and enriched by them, occasionally dis-

plays the vestiges of too hasty a developement, and of that excitation of spirit which misled the imagination and the taste of the eastern nations.

I propose, in this place, to present a general sketch of Arabian literature, in order to give an idea of its spirit, and of the influence which it has exercised over the nations of Europe; and, at the same time, to enable the reader to comprehend, in what manner that oriental style, which was borrowed by the Spaniards and the Provençals, spread itself over the other Romance languages. If we could penetrate deeper into Arabic literature, if we could unveil those brilliant fictions which have made Asia a fairy-land, and could taste the charms of that inspired poetry, which, in expressing every impetuous passion, employed the boldest yet the most ingenious figures, and communicated an emotion to the soul, of which our timid poets can form no conception, we should discover, in studies so novel and so different from those we have been accustomed to pursue, an ample recompense for any defects which might offend our more fastidious taste. But we can only flatter ourselves with the hope of impressing on the minds of others the beauties of a foreign language, in the same proportion as we are ourselves sensible of them. It is necessary to feel emotion in order to inspire it, and to be convinced of the truth of our own opinions, before we can demand the confidence of others. I am not acquainted with the Arabic, nor, indeed, with any of the languages of the East; and, on the present occasion, I shall confine myself to the selection of extracts from translations.

Ali, the fourth caliph from Mahomet, was the first who extended any protection to letters. His rival and successor, Moawihah, the first of the Ommiades (661—680), was still more favourably disposed towards them. He assembled at his court all who were most distinguished by scientific acquirements; he surrounded himself with poets; and as he had subjected to his dominion many of the Grecian isles and provinces, the sciences of Greece first began, under him, to obtain an influence over the Arabians.

After the extinction of the dynasty of the Ommiades, that of the Abassides bestowed a still more powerful patronage on letters. Al-Manzor, or Mansour, the second of these princes (754—775) invited to his court a Greek physician, whose

name was George Backtischwah, and who was the first to present to the Arabians translations of the learned medical works of the Greeks. Backtischwah, or Bocht Jesu, was descended from those persecuted Christians of the Greek empire, who had been compelled, by their attachment to the dogmas of the Nestorians, to seek for safety and tranquillity amongst the Persians, and who had there founded in the province of Gondisapor, a school of medicine, which was already celebrated in the seventh century. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople from 429 to 431, and who maintained too strenuously, in opposition to the orthodox faith, the separation of the two persons as well as of the two natures of Christ, had manifested a persecuting spirit, of which he was himself soon afterwards the victim. Thousands of Nestorians, his disciples, had perished by the steel or the faggot, after the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon ; and they, in their turn massacred about the year 500, in Persia, seven or eight thousand of their orthodox or monophysitic adversaries. After these first reprisals, however, they devoted themselves to the pursuits of science with more ardour, and at the same time with more charity, than the members of the other Christian churches ; and they preserved, in the Syriac language, the literature of Greece, which was abolished by superstition in the empire of the East. From their school, at Gondisapor, issued a crowd of learned Nestorians and Jews, who, obtaining reputation by their medical knowledge, transported to the East all the rich inheritance of Grecian literature.

The celebrated Haroun-al-Raschid, who reigned from 786 to 809, acquired a glorious name by the protection which he afforded to letters. The historian Elmacin assures us, that he never undertook a journey without carrying with him at least a hundred men of science in his train. The Arabians are indebted to him for the rapid progress which they made in science and literature ; for Haroun never built a mosque without attaching to it a school. His successors followed his example, and, in a short period, the sciences which were cultivated in the capital, spread themselves to the very extremities of the empire of the Caliphs. Whenever the faithful assembled to adore the Divinity, they found in his temple an opportunity of rendering him the noblest homage which his creatures can pay, by the cultivation of those

faculties with which their Creator has endowed them. Haroun-al-Raschid, besides, was sufficiently superior to the fanaticism which had previously animated his sect, not to despise the knowledge which the professors of another faith possessed. The head of his schools, and the first director of the studies in his empire, was a Nestorian Christian of Damascus, of the name of John Ebn Messua.

But the true protector and father of Arabic literature was Al-Mamoun (Mahomed-Aben-Amer), the seventh Caliph of the race of the Abassides, and the son of Haroun-Al-Raschid. Even in his father's lifetime, and during his journey to Khorasan, he had chosen for his companions the most celebrated men of science amongst the Greeks, the Persians, and the Chaldeans. Having succeeded to the throne (813—833) he rendered Bagdad the centre of literature. Study, books, and men of letters, almost entirely engrossed his attention. The learned were his favourites; and his ministers were occupied alone in forwarding the progress of literature. It might be said, that the throne of the Caliphs seemed to have been raised for the Muses. He invited to his court, from all parts of the world, all the learned with whose existence he was acquainted; and he retained them by rewards, honours, and distinctions of every kind. He collected from the subject-provinces of Syria, Armenia, and Egypt, the most important books which could be discovered, and which in his eyes were the most precious tribute he could demand. The governors of provinces, and the officers of administration, were directed to amass, in preference to everything else, the literary relics of the conquered countries, and to carry them to the foot of the throne. Hundreds of camels might be seen entering Bagdad, loaded with nothing but manuscripts and papers; and those which were thought to be adapted for the purposes of public instruction, were translated into Arabic, that they might be universally intelligible. Masters, instructors, translators, and commentators, formed the court of Al-Mamoun, which appeared rather to be a learned academy, than the centre of government in a warlike empire. When this Caliph dictated the terms of peace to the Greek emperor, Michael the Stammerer, the tribute which he demanded from him was a collection of Greek authors. Science, in a peculiar manner, experienced the favour of the Caliph,

notwithstanding the distrustful jealousy of some fanatical Mussulmans, who accused Al-Mamoun of shaking the foundations of Islamism. Speculative philosophy was allowed to indulge in the investigation of the most abstruse questions. The art of medicine boasted, under his empire, of some of her most celebrated professors. He had been instructed by the famous Kossa in the science of the law, which, in the eyes of the Mussulmans, was, of all the branches of human knowledge, the most sacred, and that to which they abandoned themselves with the utmost degree of ardour. The Caliph himself was much attached to the study of mathematics, which he had pursued with brilliant success. He conceived the grand design of measuring the earth, which was accomplished by his mathematicians at his own expense. The Elements of Astronomy by Alfragan (Fargani), and the Astronomical Tables of Al-Merwasi, were the productions of two of his courtiers. Not less generous than enlightened, Al-Mamoun, when he pardoned one of his relations who had revolted against him and attempted to usurp the throne, exclaimed, "If it were known what pleasure I experience in granting pardon, all who have offended against me would come and confess their crimes."

The progress of the nation in science was proportioned to the zeal of the sovereign. In all parts, in every town, schools, academies, and colleges, were established, from all of which many learned men proceeded. Bagdad was the capital of letters, as well as of the Caliphs ; but Bassora and Cufa almost equalled that city in reputation, and in the number of valuable treatises and celebrated poems which they produced. Balkh, Ispahan, and Samarcand, were equally the homes of science. The same enthusiasm had been carried, by the Arabians, beyond the frontiers of Asia. Benjamin Tudela, the Jew, relates in his Itinerary, that he found in Alexandria more than twenty schools for the propagation of philosophy. Cairo also contained a great number of colleges, and that of Betzuaila, in the suburbs of that capital, was so substantially built, that, during a rebellion, it served as a citadel for the army. In the towns of Fez and Morocco, likewise, the most magnificent buildings were appropriated to the purposes of instruction, and these establishments were governed by the wisest and most beneficent regulations. The rich libraries

of Fez and Larace preserved to Europe a number of precious volumes, which had been lost in other places. But Spain was, more especially, the seat of Arabian learning. It was there that it shone with superior brightness, and made its most rapid progress. Cordova, Grenada, Seville, and all the cities of the Peninsula, rivalled one another in the magnificence of their schools, their colleges, their academies, and their libraries. The academy of Grenada was under the direction of Schamseddin of Murcia, so celebrated amongst the Arabians. Metuahel-al-Allah, who reigned in Grenada in the twelfth century, possessed a magnificent library; and there are still preserved, in the Escurial, a great number of the manuscripts which were translated for his use. Alhaken, founder of the academy of Cordova, presented six hundred volumes to the library of that town. In various cities of Spain, seventy libraries were opened for the instruction of the public, at the period when all the rest of Europe, without books, without learning, and without cultivation, was plunged in the most disgraceful ignorance. The number of Arabic authors, which Spain produced, was so prodigious, that many Arabian bibliographers wrote learned treatises on the authors born in particular towns, as Seville, Valencia, or Cordova, or on those, amongst the Spaniards, who devoted themselves to a single branch of study, as philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and, more especially, poetry. Thus, throughout the vast extent of the Arabian empire in the three quarters of the globe, the progress of letters had followed that of arms, and literature, for five or six centuries, from the ninth to the fourteenth or fifteenth, preserved all its brilliancy.

One of the first cares of the Arabians, at the restoration of letters, would naturally be to carry to perfection the vehicle of thought and imagination; and, in point of fact, the cultivation of their language had been amongst the most important labours of the learned. They were divided into two rival schools, that of Cufa and that of Bassora, from both of which a number of distinguished men proceeded, who have analyzed, with the greatest subtlety, all the rules of the Arabic language.

The study of rhetoric was united to that of grammar; and, as it always happens in the literature of every country, the

precepts of elegant composition succeeded the models. The Koran was not written in pursuance of the rules of the rhetoricians. A confusion of ideas, produced by too elevated an enthusiasm, and an obscurity and contradiction, which were the consequences of the turbulent life and diversified designs of the author, destroyed the unity and even the interest of that volume. The chapters, moreover, were preposterously distributed, not according to their date or connexion with one another, but according to their length, commencing with the longest and finishing with the shortest; and thus a work, in which the ideas might well have been less gigantic and extravagant, became often even more unintelligible by its singular arrangement. Notwithstanding all this, there is scarcely a volume in the Arabic language which contains passages, breathing a more sublime poetry or a more enchaining eloquence. In like manner, the first harangues which were addressed to the people and the armies, to inspire them with the new faith and with a zeal for combat, undoubtedly possessed more true eloquence, than all that were afterwards composed in the schools of the most famous Arabic rhetoricians. The latter, notwithstanding, translated with eagerness the most celebrated works of the Greeks on the art of rhetoric. These they adapted to their own language, though its genius was so dissimilar; and thus they created a new art, which was illustrated by more than one Arabic Quintilian.

After the age of Mahomet and his immediate successors, popular eloquence was no longer cultivated amongst the Arabians. Eastern despotism having supplanted the liberty of the Desert, the heads of the state and the army regarded it as beneath them to harangue the people or the soldiers. They no longer relied upon their counsel or their zeal; they only called upon them for their obedience. But, if political eloquence was of no long duration amongst the Arabians, they were, on the other hand, the inventors of that species of rhetoric which is the most cultivated at the present day. They exercised themselves, alternately, in the eloquence of the academy and the pulpit. Their philosophers, so enthusiastic in the belief of the beauty of their language, took the opportunity of displaying, in these learned assemblies, all the measured harmony of which it was susceptible. In this pursuit, Malek was considered as their most fascinating orator

while Schoraïph was thought to unite, more skilfully than any other, the brilliancy of poetry with the vigour of prose, and Al-Harisi was elevated to the same rank with Demosthenes and Cicero. Mahomet, moreover, had ordained that his faith should be preached in the Mosques, and the name of orator, *khateb*, was specially appropriated, by custom to these sacred orators, and that of an harangue, *khotbah*, to their sermons. Many of these are preserved in the Escurial, and the style of them is very similar to that of the Christian orators. The preachers commenced by offering up thanks ; a profession of faith, and prayers for the sovereign and the prosperity of the kingdom followed. Then the orator entered upon his text, and opened his subject ; and, strengthening himself with the authority of the Koran and the doctors, he attempted to excite, in the hearts of the people, a love for virtue and a detestation of vice.

Poetry, still more than eloquence, was the favourite occupation of the Arabians, from their origin as a nation. It is said that this people alone has produced more poets than all others united. Arabic poetry took its rise even before the art of writing had become general, and, from remote antiquity, a number of poets had annually celebrated their academical games in the city of Ocadh. These festivals, Mahomet suppressed as a relic of idolatry. Seven of the most famous of these ancient poets have been celebrated by the Oriental writers under the title of the Arabian Pleiades ; and their works were suspended around the Caaba, or Temple of Mecca. Mahomet himself cultivated poetry, as well as Ali, Amrou, and some others of the most distinguished of his first companions ; but after him, the Arabian Muses seem to have been silent until the reign of the Abassides. It was under Haroun-al-Raschid and his successor Al-Mamoun, and more especially under the Ommiades of Spain, that Arabic poetry arrived at its highest pitch of splendour. It is at this period that we find that company of poets, chivalrous lovers, and royal princesses, whom the Oriental writers compare to Anacreon, to Pindar, and to Sappho. Their names, which I have vainly attempted to impress upon my memory, since I am unacquainted with their works, would also probably escape the greater part of my readers. The greatest celebrity to be attained in these languages, so distant from us and so

different in their character and orthography, is of such a fugitive nature, that I have been unable to find in D'Herbelot, the names of those authors whom Andres places in the first rank; as, for instance, Al-Monotabbi of Cufa, whom he calls the prince of poets. I shall not attempt, therefore, to class them according to their merit, since I am not sufficiently versed in those studies even to adopt the opinions of others. I shall prefer presenting, in this place, two fragments translated from other versions of the Arabic and Persian, and I shall accompany them with some general reflections on Asiatic poetry.

The first of the seven poems suspended in the Temple of Mecca, was an idyll, or *casside*, of Amralkeisi. The composition and plan of this ancient specimen of Arabian poetry may give some idea of what was afterwards accomplished.

The hero conducts two of his friends to the place where his harem was formerly situated, but which is now deserted, and there bewails the departure of his mistresses. As he recognises their traces, he sighs in despair, and rejects all the consolations which his friends offer him. "You have," say they, "on other occasions, experienced afflictions not less distressing than this." "I have," replies he; "but then the perfumes, which waited on the steps of my mistresses, still delighted my heart, and intoxicated my senses. My eyes, indeed, then were filled with tears, but they were the tears of passionate love; they flowed down my cheeks and my bosom, and with them my breast-plate was bedewed." "At least," his friends rejoin, "let the memory of your past happiness soothe your present griefs. Reflect how often they have given new charms to life." The hero, solaced by these recollections, recalls all the happy hours he had passed, and the delights he had proved in the company of Oneiza and of Fatima, the fairest amongst the fair. He boasts of having loved a virgin of unequalled beauty: "Her neck," says he, "resembled that of the gazelle, when it raises it to descry a distant object. She was adorned with brilliant necklaces. Her long locks floated over her shoulders: black were they as ebony, and clustering as the undulating branches of the palm. Slender and flexible as a thread was her figure, and her countenance illumined the shades of night, like the lamp of the lonely sage, who pursues his studious vigil. Her very

garments reflected the azure of the skies, and their fringes of precious stones were like the Pleiades, when they appear above the horizon." He adds, that, to obtain her, he had pierced through hostile lances, and braved the most frightful dangers. He then praises his own courage, and the constancy with which he had traversed, by night, dark and savage valleys; and at the same time he takes an opportunity of passing an eulogy upon his horse, which he describes in a strain of the most brilliant poetry. He then presents a picture of a chase, and afterwards of a festival; and the poem is terminated by an admirable description of the showers which refresh the burning desert.*

In order, also, to give the reader some idea of the Persian, I shall translate a fragment of the Schah-Namah of Ferduzi, from a Latin version by Frederick Wilken. The lines of this poem are rhymed in couplets, like our heroic verse. The hero speaks and expresses his love for the daughter of Afrasiab:—

"Behold! how the fields glitter with the red and the yellow rays! What noble heart of man would not beat with joy? How beautiful are the stars! How sweetly does the water murmur! Is not this the garden of an emperor's palace? The colours of the earth are varied, like the tapestry of the kings of Ormuz; the air is perfumed with musk; and the waters of the brooks, are not they the essence of roses? This jasmine, bending under the weight of its flowers, this thicket of roses, shedding their perfume, seem like the Divinities of the garden. The pheasant majestically advances, proud of its beautiful plumage, whilst the turtledove and the nightingale tremblingly descend upon the lower branches of the cypress. As far as the eye can stretch along the stream, a paradise blooms around. The plains and the hills, are they not covered with young girls, more beautiful than the angels? Wherever Menischeh, the daughter of Afrasiab, appears, we find men happy. It is she who makes the garden as brilliant as the sun; the daughter of an august monarch, is she not a new star? It is she who has shed her riches and her splendour over this valley; she is the brilliant star that rises over the rose and the jasmine. Peerless beauty! Her features are veiled, but the elegance of her figure rivals the cypress. Her

* William Jones, Poeseos Asiaticæ Commentarii 8vo. p. 84

breath spreads the perfume of amber around her; upon her cheeks reposes the rose. How languishing are her eyes! Her lips have stolen their colour from the finest wines, but their odour is like the essence of roses. Thanks be to God that we have been enabled to reach this blessed place, and that our journey was but of a day's length!"

After introducing these two fragments, which are certainly very inconsiderable, when presented as specimens of a literature as rich as that of all Europe, I shall only add, on the authority of Sir William Jones, that the Orientals, and especially the Arabians, possess many heroic poems, composed for the purpose of celebrating the praises of distinguished men, or of animating the courage of their soldiers. They do not, however, boast of any epics, although Sir William has given that title to the history of Timour, or Tamerlane, written in a poetical kind of prose by Ebn Arabschah. With more reason, it should seem, he has placed, in the rank of epic poems, the work of the Persian poet Ferduzi, called the Schah-Namah, of which I have just given a short specimen. This poem consists of sixty thousand couplets, on all the heroes and kings of Persia. The first half, which can alone be considered as possessing an epic character, describes the ancient war between Afrasiab, king of Transoxian Tartary, and Caikhosru, who is known to us under the name of Cyrus. The hero of the poem is Rustem, the Hercules of Persia.*

With the exception of this single work, the poetry of the East is entirely lyric or didactic. The Arabians have been inexhaustible in their love-poems, their elegies on the death of their heroes, or of their beauties, their moral verses, amongst which their fables may be reckoned, their eulogistic, their satirical, their descriptive, and, above all, their didactic poems, which embrace even the most abstruse science, as grammar, rhetoric, and arithmetic. But, amongst all their poems, the catalogue of which, in the Escurial alone, consists of twenty-four volumes, there is not a single epic, comedy, or tragedy.

In these different branches of poetry, the Orientals displayed a surprising subtlety, and great refinement of thought.

* Ferduzi, the author of the Schah-Namah, died in the year of the Hegira 411, or A.D. 1019.

Their style of expression is graceful and elegant, their sentiments are noble, and, if we may credit the Oriental scholars, there prevails, in the original language, a harmony in the verses, a propriety in the expression, and a grace throughout, which are neeessarily lost in a translation. But it cannot escape us that the fame of these lyric compositions rests, in some degree, on their bold metaphors, their extravagant allegories, and their exeessive hyperboles. It may justly be asserted that the greatest characteristic of Oriental taste is an abuse of the imagination and of the intellect. The Arabs despised the poetry of the Greeks, which to them appeared timid, cold, and constrained; and, amongst all the books, which, with almost a superstitious veneration, they borrowed from that people, there is scarcely a single poem. None of those relics of classical genius were adjudged worthy of a translation; and neither Homer nor Sophocles, nor even Pindar, was allowed to enter into a comparison with their own poets. The object of the Arabians was always to make a brilliant use of the boldest and most gigantic images. They sought to astonish the reader by the abruptness of their expressions; and they burdened their compositions with riches, under the idea that nothing which was beautiful could be superfluous. They were not contented with one comparison, but heaped them one upon another, not to assist the reader in catching their ideas, but to excite his admiration of their colouring. They neglected natural sentiment, and made an exhibition of art; and the more the ornaments of art were multiplied, the more admirable in their eyes did their work appear. On this account, they were perpetually seeking for difficulties to vanquish, though these added neither to the developement of the idea, nor to the harmony of the verse.

To those nations who possessed a classical poetry, the imitation of nature had discovered the use of the epic and the drama, in which the poet endeavours to express the true language of the human heart. The people of the East never made this attempt. Their poetry is entirely lyric. It ought, indeed, to bear a character of inspiration, to justify it in rising so far above the common language of nature. Under whatever name it be known, and to whatever rules it has been subjected, it will always be found to be the language of the passions.

The poetry of the Arabians is rhymed like our own, and the rhyming is often carried still farther in the construction of the verse, while the uniformity of the sound is frequently echoed throughout the whole expression. Their lyrical poetry is, moreover, subjected to particular rules, either in the form of the strophe, or in the order of the rhymes, or in the length of the poems. They extend to the whole sentence that poetical harmony which already prevailed in each distinct or individual verse. Two kinds of versification were in the most general use amongst the Arabians and the Persians, the *ghazèle* and the *casside*. Both these are compositions in couplets, and the second lines of each couplet rhyme with one another throughout the whole poem. The first lines are not rhymed. Thus, in that species of versification which the Spaniards have called *assonant*, and which they have apparently borrowed from the Arabians, the same rhyme, or rather the same terminating vowel, is repeated in every other line for several pages, whilst the first lines of each couplet are not rhymed. The *casside* is an amatory or warlike idyll, the length of which varies from twenty to a hundred couplets. The *ghazèle* is an amatory ode, which cannot comprise less than seven nor more than thirteen couplets. The first may be correctly classed with the *canzoni* of Petrarch, the latter with his sonnets; and as Petrarch composed a *canzoniere*, or collection of *canzoni* and sonnets on different subjects, and as the other Provençal, Italian, Spanish, and Portugese poets had their *canzonieri*, the principal merit of which was the union of a variety of images with a single sentiment, and of many harmonious changes with only a single measure; so the Arabians and the Persians had their *divans*, which are collections of *ghazèles*, varying in the termination or the rhyme. A perfect *divan*, in their eyes, was that in which the poet had regularly pursued in his rhymes all the letters of the alphabet, for they had a taste for constraint without harmony; a taste which we can trace throughout all the Romance poetry, and amongst all the nations who have been formed in their school.

But, if the Eastern nations possess not the epic or the drama, they have been, on the other hand, the inventors of a style of poetry which is related to the epic, and which supplies, amongst them, the place of the drama. We owe

to them those tales of which the conception is so brilliant and the imagination so rich and varied ; tales, which have been the delight of our infancy, and which at a more advanced age we never read without feeling their enchantments anew. Every one is acquainted with the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, but if we may believe the French translator, we do not possess the six-and-thirtieth part of the great Arabian collection. This prodigious collection is not confined merely to books, but forms the treasure of a numerous class of men and women, who throughout the whole extent of the Mahomedan dominion, in Turkey, Persia, and even to the extremity of India, find a livelihood in reciting these tales to crowds who delight to forget, in the pleasing dreams of imagination, the melancholy feelings of the present moment. In the coffeehouses of the Levant, one of these men will gather a silent crowd around him. Sometimes he will excite terror or pity, but he more frequently pictures to his audience those brilliant and fantastic visions which are the patrimony of eastern imaginations. He will even occasionally provoke laughter, and the severe brows of the fierce Mussulmans will only unbend upon an occasion like this. This is the only exhibition of the kind in all the Levant, where these recitations supply the place of our dramatic representations. The public squares abound with these storytellers, who fill up the heavy hours of the seraglio. The physicians frequently recommend them to their patients, in order to soothe pain, to calm agitation, or to produce sleep after long watchfulness ; and these storytellers, accustomed to sickness, modulate their voices, soften their tones, and gently suspend them, as sleep steals over the sufferer.

The imagination of the Arabs, which shines in all its brilliancy in these tales, is easily distinguished from the imagination of the chivalric nations, though it is easy to perceive a certain resemblance between them. The supernatural world is the same in both, but the moral world is different. The Arabian tales, like the romances of chivalry, convey us into the fairy-realms, but the human personages which they introduce, are very dissimilar. These tales had their birth, after the Arabians, yielding the empire of the sword to the Tartars, the Turks, and the Persians, had devoted themselves to commerce, literature, and the arts. We

recognise, in them, the style of a mercantile people, as we do that of a warlike nation, in the romances of chivalry. Riches and artificial luxuries dispute the palm with the splendid gifts of the fairies. The heroes unceasingly traverse distant realms, and the interests of merchandise excite their active curiosity, as much as the love of renown awakened the spirit of the ancient knights. Besides the female characters, we find in these tales only four distinct classes of persons—princes, merchants, monks or calendars, and slaves. Soldiers are scarcely ever introduced upon the stage. Valour and military achievements, in these tales, as in the records of the East, inspire terror and produce the most desolating effects, but excite no enthusiasm. There is, on this account, in the Arabian tales, something less noble and heroic than we usually expect in compositions of this nature. But, on the other hand, we must consider that these storytellers are our masters in the art of producing, sustaining, and unceasingly varying the interest of this kind of fiction ; that they are the creators of that brilliant mythology of fairies and genii, which extends the bounds of the world, multiplies the riches and the strength of human nature, and which, without striking us with terror, carries us into the realms of marvels and of prodigies. It is from them that we have derived that intoxication of love, that tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, and that reverential awe of women, by turns slaves and divinities, which have operated so powerfully on our chivalrous feelings. We trace their effects in all the literature of the South, which owes to this cause its mental character. Many of these tales had found their way into our poetical literature long before the translation of the " Arabian Nights." Some of them are to be met with in our old Fabliaux, in Boccacio, and in Ariosto, and these very tales which have charmed our infancy, passing from tongue to tongue, and from nation to nation, through channels frequently unknown, are now familiar to the memory, and form the delight of the imagination, of half the inhabitants of the globe.

But the influence which the Arabians exercised over the literature of Europe, must not be measured merely by the admiration which their poetry excited. The rapid progress which they made in the sciences, gave them an universal authority over the kingdom of the mind ; and those whom

the learned of Europe regarded as their masters in the sciences of arithmetic, natural philosophy, history, and geography, appeared equally worthy to be the infallible oracles of taste. In reference, therefore, to European literature, it is important to enquire what was the state of science amongst the Arabians, at the period when our ancestors made their first attempts to emerge from a state of barbarism.

Every branch of history was cultivated with lively interest by the Arabians. Several authors, amongst whom the most celebrated was Aboul-Feda, prince of Hamah, wrote an universal History, from the beginning of the world to their own days. Every state, every province, every city possessed its individual chronicler and historian. Many, in imitation of Plutarch, composed the lives of great men, who had been distinguished by their virtues, their achievements, or their talents. There was, indeed, amongst the Arabians, such a passion for every species of composition, and such a desire to leave no subject untouched, that Ben-Zaid of Cordova, and Aboul-Monder of Valencia, wrote a serious history of celebrated horses; as did Alasueco, of camels which had risen to distinction. Historical dictionaries were invented by the Arabians, and Abdel-Maleck accomplished for the nations which spoke his language, what Moreri has done for the Europeans. They possessed, besides, geographical dictionaries of great accuracy, and others on critical and bibliographical subjects. In short, all those inventions which curtail labour, dispense with the necessity of research, and afford facilities to idleness, were known to the Arabians. The knowledge of coins was familiar to them, and Al-Namari wrote the history of Arabian money. Each art and each science had its history, of which the Arabians possessed a more complete collection than any other nation, either ancient or modern. Al-Assaker wrote commentaries on the first inventors of the arts. Al-Gazel, in his learned work on Arabian antiquities, treated, in a profound manner, of the studies and inventions of his countrymen. Medicine and philosophy had even a greater number of historians than the other sciences; and all these different works were embodied in the historical dictionary of sciences, compiled by Mohammad-Aba-Abdallah of Grenada.

Philosophy was passionately cultivated by the Arabians

and upon it was founded the fame of many ingenious and sagacious men, whose names are still revered in Europe. Averrhoes of Cordova, was the great commentator on the works of Aristotle, and died in 1198. Avicenna, from the neighbourhood of Chyraz, who died in 1037, was a profound philosopher as well as a celebrated physician. Al-Farabi of Farab, in Transoxiana, died in 950. He spoke seventy languages, wrote upon all the sciences, and collected them into an encyclopædia. Al-Gazeli of Thous, who submitted religion to the test of philosophy, died in 1111. The learned Arabians did not confine themselves to the studies which they could only prosecute in their closets. They undertook, for the advancement of science, the most perilous and painful journeys; they became the counsellors of princes, and they were often involved in the revolutions which, in the East, are so violent and generally so cruel. Their private life was thus more varied, more chequered with accidents, and more romantic, than that of the philosophers and learned of any other nation.

Of all the sciences cultivated by the Arabians, philosophy was that which penetrated most rapidly into the West, and which had the greatest influence in the schools of Europe; and yet it was the one, the progress of which was, in fact, the least real. The Arabians, more ingenious than profound, attached themselves rather to the subtleties than to the connexion of ideas. Their object was more to dazzle than to instruct. Their obscurity gave them, in the eyes of the vulgar, an air of profundity. They exhausted their imaginations in search of mysteries; they enveloped science in clouds, instead of penetrating into its real nature, and dissipating the obscurity produced by the grandeur of the subject or the weakness of the human intellect; an obscurity which is not the offspring of philosophy, but the obstacle over which it is the aim of philosophy to triumph. More enthusiastic than enterprising, they were willing rather to consider man as the oracle of all human knowledge, than to seek for it in the primary sources of nature. Aristotle was worshipped by them as a sort of divinity. In their opinion, all philosophy was to be found in his writings, and they explained every metaphysical question according to the scholastic rules.

An accurate translation and a subtle commentary on the

work of the Stagyrite, appeared to them the highest pitch to which the genius of a philosopher could attain. With this object they read, they explained, and they compared all the commentaries of the first disciples of Aristotle. It is singular, however, that such able men, with long study, with so much assistance, and after the industrious application of so many years, never succeeded in comprehending and explaining, with clearness, the authors who were the subject of their labours. They were all of them in error, and sometimes grossly so. Averrhoes, in his translations and commentaries, has often no sort of connexion with his original. The mania of discovering mysteries in the most simple things, and hidden meanings in the clearest phrases, would have rendered the school of Aristotle, amongst the Arabians, if he could have appeared once more upon earth, quite unintelligible even to the philosopher himself.

The natural sciences were cultivated by the Arabians, not only with more ardour, but with a juster view of the means it was necessary to pursue, in order to master them. Abou-Ryan-al-Byrouny, who died in the year 941, travelled forty years for the purpose of studying mineralogy; and his treatise, on the knowledge of precious stones, is a rich collection of facts and observations. Ibn or Aben-al-Beïthar of Malaga, who devoted himself with the same eagerness to the study of botany, travelled over all the mountains and plains of Europe, in search of plants. He afterwards traversed the burning sands of Africa, for the purpose of collecting and describing such vegetables as can support the fervid heat of that climate; and he subsequently passed into the most remote countries of Asia. In the three portions of the globe then known, he observed with his own eyes every thing strange and rare, which the three kingdoms of nature presented to him. Animals, vegetables, and fossils, all underwent his inspection; and he returned at last to his own country, loaded with the spoils of the East and the South. He published successively three volumes, one on the virtues of plants, another on stones and metals, and the third on animals, which contained more true science than any naturalist had hitherto displayed. He died in 1248 at Damascus, whither he had returned, and where he was made superintendent of the gardens to the prince. In addition to these, there were others, amongst the

Arabians, who merited the gratitude of posterity, such as Al-Rasi, Ali-Ben-al-Abbas, and Avicenna. Chemistry, of which the Arabians were, in some sort, the inventors, gave them a better acquaintance with nature than the Greeks or the Romans ever possessed; and this science was applied by them most usefully and exclusively to all the necessary arts of life. Above all, agriculture was studied by them with that perfect knowledge of the climate, the soil, and the growth of plants and animals, which can alone reduce long experience into a science. No nation of Europe, Asia, or Africa, either ancient or modern, has possessed a code of rural laws more wise, just, and perfect, than that of the Arabians of Spain; nor has any nation ever been elevated by the wisdom of its laws, the intelligence, activity, and industry of its inhabitants, to a higher pitch of agricultural prosperity than Moorish Spain, and more especially the kingdom of Grenada. Nor were the arts cultivated with less success, or less enriched by the progress of natural philosophy. A great number of the inventions which, at the present day, add the comforts of life, and without which, literature could never have flourished, are due to the Arabians. Thus, paper, now so necessary to the progress of the intellect, the want of which plunged Europe, from the seventh to the tenth century, into such a state of ignorance and barbarism, is an Arabic invention. In China, indeed, from all antiquity, it had been manufactured from silk; but about the year 30 of the Hegira, A.D. 649, this invention was introduced at Samarcand; and when that flourishing city was conquered by the Arabians, in the year 85 of the Hegira, an Arabian, of the name of Joseph Amrou, carried the process by which paper was made, to Mecca, his native city. He employed cotton in the manufacture; and the first paper, nearly resembling that which we now use, was made in the year 88 of the Hegira, A.D. 706. This invention spread with rapidity throughout all the dominions of the Arabians, and more especially in Spain, where the town of Sativa, in the kingdom of Valencia, now called San-Philippo, was renowned from the twelfth century for its beautiful manufactures of paper. It appears that, at this time, the Spaniards had substituted, in the fabrication of paper, flax, which grew abundantly with them, for cotton, which was much more scarce and dear

It was not until the end of the thirteenth century that, at the instance of Alfonso X, king of Castile, paper-mills were established in the Christian states of Spain, from whence the invention passed, in the fourteenth century only, to Trevisa and Padua.

Gunpowder, the discovery of which is generally attributed to a German chemist, was known to the Arabians at least a century before any traces of it appear in the European historians. In the thirteenth century, it was frequently employed by the Moors in their wars in Spain, and some indications remain of its having been known in the eleventh century. The compass also, the invention of which has been given, alternately, to the Italians and the French in the thirteenth century, was already known to the Arabians in the eleventh. The Geographer of Nubia, who wrote in the twelfth century, speaks of it as an instrument universally employed. The numerals which we call Arabic, but which, perhaps, ought rather to be called Indian, were, undoubtedly, at least communicated to us by the Arabians. Without them, none of the sciences in which calculation is employed, could have been carried to the point at which they have arrived in our day, and which the great mathematicians and astronomers, amongst the Arabians, very nearly approached. The number of Arabic inventions, of which we enjoy the benefit without suspecting it, is prodigious. But they have been introduced into Europe, in every direction, slowly and imperceptibly; for those who imported them did not arrogate to themselves the fame of the invention, meeting, as they did in every country, people who, like themselves, had seen them practised in the East. It is peculiarly characteristic of all the pretended discoveries of the middle ages, that when the historians mention them for the first time, they treat them as things in general use. Neither gunpowder, nor the compass, nor the Arabic numerals, nor paper, are any where spoken of as discoveries, and yet they must have wrought a total change in war, in navigation, in science, and in education. It cannot be doubted but that the inventor, if he had lived at that time, would have had sufficient vanity to claim so important a discovery. Since that was not the case, it may reasonably be presumed that all these inventions were slowly imported by obscure individuals, and not by men of genius,

and that they were brought from a country where they were already universally known.

Such, then, was the brilliant light which literature and science displayed, from the ninth to the fourteenth century of our æra, in those vast countries which had submitted to the yoke of Islamism. Many melancholy reflections arise when we enumerate the long list of names which, though unknown to us, were then so illustrious, and of manuscripts buried in dusty libraries, which yet, in their time, exercised a powerful influence over the human intellect. What remains of so much glory? Not more than five or six individuals are in a situation to take advantage of the manuscript treasures which are inclosed in the library of the Escurial. A few hundreds of men only, dispersed throughout all Europe, have qualified themselves, by obstinate application, to explore the rich mines of Oriental literature. These scholars with difficulty obtain a few rare and obscure manuscripts; but they are unable to advance far enough to form a judgment of the whole scope of that literature, of which they have so partial a knowledge. But the boundless regions where Islamism reigned and still continues to reign, are now dead to the interests of science. The rich countries of Fez and Morocco, illustrious, for five centuries, by the number of their academies, their universities, and their libraries, are now only deserts of burning sand, which the human tyrant disputes with the beast of prey. The smiling and fertile shores of Mauritania, where commerce, arts, and agriculture attained their highest prosperity, are now the retreats of corsairs, who spread horror over the seas, and who only relax from their labours in shameful debaucheries, until the plague periodically comes to select its victims from amongst them, and to avenge offended humanity. Egypt has, by degrees, been swallowed up by the sands which formerly fertilized it. Syria and Palestine are desolated by the wandering Bedouins, less terrible still than the Pacha who oppresses them. Bagdad, formerly the residence of luxury, of power, and of knowledge, is a heap of ruins. The celebrated universities of Cufa and Bassora are extinct. Those of Samarcand and Balkh share in the destruction. In this immense extent of territory, twice or thrice as large as Europe, nothing is found but ignorance, slavery, terror, and death. Few men are capable

of reading the works of their illustrious ancestors; and of the few who could comprehend them, none are able to procure them. The prodigious literary riches of the Arabians, of which we have now given only a very cursory view, no longer exist in any of the countries where the Arabians and the Mussulmans rule. It is not there that we must seek, either for the fame of their great men, or for their writings. What have been preserved are in the hands of their enemies, in the convents of the monks, or in the royal libraries of Europe. And yet these vast countries have not been conquered. It is not the stranger who has despoiled them of their riches, who has annihilated their population, and destroyed their laws, their manners, and their national spirit. The poison was their own: it was administered by themselves, and the result has been their own destruction.

Who may say that Europe itself, whither the empire of letters and of science has been transported; which sheds so brilliant a light; which forms so correct a judgment of the past, and which compares so well the successive reigns of the literature and manners of antiquity, shall not, in a few ages, become as wild and deserted as the hills of Mauritania, the sands of Egypt, and the valleys of Anatolia? Who may say that in some new land, perhaps in those lofty regions, whence the Oronoco and the river of the Amazons have their source, or, perhaps, in the impregnable mountain-fastnesses of New Holland, nations with other manners, other languages, other thoughts, and other religions, shall not arise, once more to renew the human race, and to study the past as we have studied it; nations who, hearing with astonishment of our existence, that our knowledge was as extensive as their own, and that we, like themselves, placed our trust in the stability of fame, shall pity our impotent efforts, and recall the names of Newton, of Racine, and of Tasso, as examples of the vain struggles of man to snatch that immortality of glory, which fate has refused to bestow?

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH OF THE POETRY AND LANGUAGE OF PROVENCE—INFLUENCE OF THE ARABIANS ON THE GENIUS AND TASTE OF THE TROUBADOURS.

When, in the tenth century, the nations of the south of Europe attempted to give a consistency to the rude dialects which had been produced by the mixture of the Latin with the northern tongues, one of the new languages appeared to prevail over the others. Sooner formed, more generally spread, and more rapidly cultivated than its rivals, it seemed to assume the place of the forsaken Latin. Thousands of poets flourished, almost contemporaneously, in this new language, who gave it a character of originality which owes nothing to the Greeks or the Romans, or to what is called classical literature. They spread their reputation from the extremity of Spain to that of Italy; and they have served as models to all the poets who afterwards succeeded them in other languages, even to those of the North, and, amongst these, to the English and the German. All at once, however, this ephemeral reputation vanished. The voice of the Troubadours was silent; the Provençal was abandoned, and, undergoing new changes, again became a mere dialect, till after a brilliant existence of three centuries, its productions were ranked amongst those of the dead languages. From this period, it received no additions.

The high reputation of the Provençal poets, and the rapid decline of their language, are two phenomena equally striking in the history of the cultivation of the human mind. That literature, which has given models to other nations, yet, amongst its crowd of agreeable poems, has not produced a single masterpiece, a single work of genius destined to immortality, is the more worthy of our attention, as it is entirely the offspring of the age, and not of individuals. It reveals to us the sentiments, the imagination, and the spirit of the modern nations, in their infancy. It exhibits what

was common to all and pervaded all, and not what genius superior to the age, enabled a single individual to accomplish. Thus the return of the beautiful days of spring is announced to us, not by some single wonder of the gardens, in the production of which the artificial exertions of man have seconded the efforts of nature, but by the brilliant flowers of the fields, and by the prodigality of the meadows.

It is, unfortunately, very difficult to obtain the Troubadour poets; and, when obtained, to form a just idea of them. A learned Frenchman, M. de la Curne de St. Palaye, has, it is true, devoted his whole life to collecting, explaining, and commentating upon these works; but his immense collection, consisting of twenty-five folio volumes in manuscript, has not been, nor can be printed. He has left his writings in an unfinished and disordered state. The compositions of hundreds of poets are mingled together in each volume, and the labour of classing them, and of rendering them accessible, still remains to be undergone. The Royal Library of France contains vast treasures of Provençal manuscripts; but of these it is still more difficult to make any use. It is necessary to examine the volumes, from one end to the other, in order to acquire a knowledge of their contents; but the difficulty of the old writing and the contractions render this a painful task, in a language so little known. These manuscripts, moreover, are only within the reach of a few individuals. Several works on the influence of the Troubadours in Europe, have, it is true, been announced by literary men of celebrity; but hitherto none have appeared, nor has the text of any of those poets been given to the public.* We

* Three years only after the publication of the first edition of this work, M. Raynouard published, in 1816, the first volume of his work, entitled *Choix des Poésies originales, des Troubadours.* He has thus begun to supply that blank with the existence of which, for so long a period, in their literature and their history, the French have been so justly reproached. But hitherto this volume, which only contains some enquiries into the formation of the Romance language and grammar, has not been followed by the collection of original poems, for which the public is so impatient. The second volume, it is said, will contain many specimens of the Romance language anterior to the year 1000, which have been discovered by M Raynouard. The third and fourth volumes will contain almost all that remains of the amatory, political, and satirical poetry of the Troubadours. A publication like this can alone enable the literary world to form a judgment of this language and of its

at present only find scattered abroad, in works of different kinds, a few fragments, which may convey a knowledge of the Provençal versification, but which are not sufficient to familiarize us with this language, so as to enable us to taste its beauties. We are obliged to content ourselves, in treating of the Troubadours, with extracts from the Abbé Millot, who, taking the labours of St. Palaye as his ground-work, has given us, in three volumes, the Lives of the Provençal Poets, some notices of their works, and short translations of the most striking passages. But his style is, almost invariably, tedious and insipid.

The works on the lives of the Troubadours are much more numerous than the collections of their poems; and, indeed, their lives, independently, of their verses, present a sufficiently interesting and novel idea of their age, if they were better entitled to our confidence. Unfortunately, they are written without any attention to the rules of criticism, without regard to truth, and with the design rather of striking the imagination by brilliant and romantic adventures, than of adhering to facts, or keeping within the bounds of possibility. With respect to the biography of these poets, there are two original collections made by the monks, still remaining in manuscript. One of these was compiled, in the twelfth century, by Carmentiere, a monk of the Isles of Hieres, by the direction of Alphonso II. King of Arragon and Count of Provence; the other by a Genoese of the family of Cibo, who is known by the name of *Monge des Iles d'Or*, or the Monk of the Isles of Gold; and who, at the end of the fourteenth century, cor-

poets, which are at present rather matter of conjecture than of study. At the same time, the work must throw much light on the history and manners of ancient France.

[1826. The work of M. Raynouard is now complete, but I must confess that he leaves much to be desired. It is a selection of what M. Raynouard considered the most poetical, in the remains of the Troubadours. It is handsomely printed, doubtless correctly, but without notes, without annotation, without translation; we can never hope to see the obscure poems of the Troubadours an ornament of the boudoir; it was necessary then to adapt it for the learned, to preserve entire portions, which describe the age and manners, at the risk of more than once offending either taste or modesty. In short, it was necessary to have given the bad along with the good, for it is the *ensemble* that displays the man. He ought to have assisted our knowledge of these poems by notes, both upon authors and their works. No one was better fitted for such a task than M. Raynouard.]

rected and perfected the manuscript of Carmentiere, and dedicated it to the reigning Count of Provence, Louis II. King of Naples, of the second house of Anjou. In 1575, John Nostradamus, Procurator of the Parliament of Provence, published his Lives of the Provençal Poets : a work without the slightest pretensions to critical knowledge, yet which, at the present day, forms the groundwork of their history. He was father of the celebrated physician and astrologer, Michael Nostradamus, whose obscure Centuries have been so often applied to every great event, and uncle of Cæsar Nostradamus, the author of a History of Provence, (fol. 1614) where these lives have been inserted. The Italians, with fewer opportunities than the French of becoming acquainted with the Troubadours, have displayed more zeal regarding them. Crescimbeni has devoted a whole volume to the Lives of the Provençal Poets, which he has selected from Nostradamus. All the Italian poets have mentioned them with respect, and all the literary historians of that country have recognised their powerful influence. The Spaniards have paid them no less homage. Sanchez, Father Sarmiento, Andres, and the Marquis of Santillana, have illustrated their history, and shewn the connexion of the Provençal poetry with that of the Arabians, and of all the Romance nations.

In Italy, on the renewal of the language, each province and each petty district had a dialect of its own. This was owing to two causes : first, to the great number of barbarous nations with whom the Romans had been successively mingled by the frequent invasions of their territories ; and, secondly, to the great number of independent sovereignties which were established in that country. Neither of these causes operated upon the Gauls, at the time of the formation of the Romance language. Three nations had settled themselves there, nearly at the same time, the Visigoths, the Burgundians, and the Franks. After the conquest of the latter, none of the barbarous people of the North, with the exception of the Normans, succeeded in effecting a permanent establishment in any of the provinces ; nor was there any mixture with the German nations, still less with the Sclavonians or the Scythians, to alter their language or their manners. The Gauls were thus employed for four centuries, in consolidating

themselves into one empire, and forming one language; during which period, Italy was successively the prey of the Lombards, the Franks, the Hungarians, the Saracens, and the Germans. Thus the birth of the Romance language in Gaul, preceded that of the Italian. It was divided into two principal dialects: the Romance-Provençal, spoken in all the provinces to the south of the Loire, which had been originally conquered by the Visigoths and Burgundians; and the Romance-Wallon, in the provinces to the north of the Loire, where the dominion of the Franks prevailed. The political divisions of the country were conformable to this primary distinction of nations and of languages. Notwithstanding the independence of the great feudatories, the north of France had always formed a single political body. The inhabitants of the different provinces were united in the same national assemblies and in the same armies. Southern France, on the other hand, after having been the inheritance of several of the successors of Charlemagne, was elevated in 879 to the rank of an independent kingdom, by Bozon, who was crowned at Mantes under the title of King of Arles, and who reduced under his dominion Provence, Dauphiny, Savoy, the Lyonnese, and some provinces of Burgundy. The sovereignty of this territory exchanged, in 943, the title of King for that of Count, under Bozon II.; but the kingdom of Provence was preserved entire, and continued in the house of Burgundy, of which Bozon I. was the founder. This noble house became extinct in 1092, in the person of Gilibert, who left only two daughters, between whom his possessions were divided. One of these, Faydide, married Alphonso, Count of Toulouse; and the other, Douce, became the wife of Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona.

The union of Provence, during two hundred and thirteen years, under a line of princes, who, though they did not play any brilliant part abroad, and are almost forgotten in history, never experienced any foreign invasion, but, by a paternal government, augmented the population and riches of the state, and favoured commercial pursuits, to which their maritime situation inclined them, consolidated the laws, the language, and the manners of Provence. It was at this period, that without exciting observation, the Romance-Provençal, in the kingdom of Arles, completely displaced the Latin. The

latter was still employed in the acts of government; but the former, which was universally spoken, soon began to be applied to the purposes of literature.

The accession of Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona and husband of Douce, to the throne of Provence, gave a new direction to the national spirit, by the mixture of the Catalans with the Provençals. Of the three Romance languages, which the Christians of Spain at that time spoke, the Catalan, the Castilian, and the Galician or Portuguese, the first was almost entirely similar to the Provençal, and although, eventually, a decided discrepancy appeared, more especially in the kingdom of Valencia, it still retained an appellation borrowed from the name of a French province. The natives called it *Llemosi* or *Limousin*. The Catalans, therefore, were perfectly intelligible to the Provençals, and their union at the same court mutually refined them. The former, it is true, had already received some cultivation, either in consequence of their wars and intercourse with the Moors of Spain, or of the commercial activity of the city of Barcelona. That city enjoyed very ample privileges. The citizens placed a just estimation on the freedom they possessed, and at the same time caused it to be respected by their princes. Their riches, moreover, rendered the imposts exceedingly productive, and enabled the Counts to display a magnificence at their courts, unknown to other sovereigns. Raymond Berenger and his successors introduced into Provence the spirit both of liberty and chivalry, and a taste for elegance and the arts, with all the sciences of the Arabians. The union of these noble sentiments gave birth to that poetical spirit which shone out, at once, over Provence and all the south of Europe, like an electric flash in the midst of the most palpable darkness, illuminating all things by the brightness of its flame.

At the same time with the Provençal poetry, chivalry had its rise. It was, in a manner, the soul of the new literature; and the character which is thus given to the latter, so different from any thing in antiquity, and so rich in poetical invention, is one of the most important matters of observation in the history of modern literature. We must not confound chivalry with the feudal system. The feudal system may be called the real life of the period of which we are treating,

possessing its advantages and inconveniences, its virtues and its vices. Chivalry, on the contrary, is the ideal world, such as it existed in the imaginations of the Romance writers. Its essential character is devotion to woman and to honour. But the poetical notions which then prevailed, as to the virtues which constituted the perfection of knights and ladies, were not entirely the fictions of the brain. They existed amongst the people, though perhaps without being carried into action ; and when at last they acquired greater stability by the heroic songs in which they were inculcated, they began to assert a more practical influence over the people who had given them birth, and the realities of the feudal system became identified with the fictions of chivalry.

That bold and active life which distinguishes the feudal times was, no doubt, exceedingly attractive. Every lord, enjoying the most complete independence, lived in his own castle, convinced that God was his only judge and master. His trust was in his own strength, which enabled him to brave oppression, and to offer an asylum to the weak and the unfortunate. He divided with his friends the only possessions of the value of which he was sensible, his arms and his horses, looking only to his own prowess for liberty, and glory, and safety. But, at this period, the vices of the human character were developed with a force proportioned to the native vigour of the soul. Amongst the nobility, to whom alone the laws seemed to afford protection, absolute power had produced its usual effects, an infatuation which borders upon insanity, and a ferocity of which modern times no longer afford examples. The tyranny of a baron, it is true, extended not beyond a few leagues around his castle or his town ; and, this boundary once passed, the fugitive was in safety. But within his domain, in which he confined his vassals like deer, he gave way, in the consciousness of his omnipotence, to the most ridiculous caprices, and punished those who displeased him, in the most terrific manner. His vassals, who trembled at his presence, had forfeited all the privileges of human nature ; and, in this class of society there perhaps existed not for several centuries a single individual, who showed any symptoms of greatness of soul or virtue. Frankness and loyalty, which are essentially chivalric

virtues, are in general the consequences of strength and of courage ; but, in order to render their practice general, it is necessary that some chastisement or disgrace should attend their violation. But, in the midst of their castles, the lords were devoid of all fear, and public opinion had no influence over men to whom social life was unknown. The middle ages, consequently, display more examples of scandalous treachery that any other period. Love, it is true, had assumed a new character, which preserved the same shape under the operation of the realities of the feudal system and of the romantic fictions of chivalry. It was not more tender and passionate than amongst the Greeks and the Romans, but it was more respectful, and something of mystery was mingled with its sentiment. Some remains of the same religious veneration continued to be felt for women, which the Germans evinced towards their prophetesses. They were considered rather as angelic beings than as dependants and inferiors. The task of serving and protecting them was considered honourable, as though they were the representatives of the divinity upon earth ; and to this worship an ardour of feeling and a turbulence of passion and desire were superadded, little known to the Germans, but peculiar to the people of the South, and the expression of which was borrowed from the Arabians. Amongst the chivalrous, love always preserved this pure and religious character. But, where the feudal system extended its influence, the most extreme disorder prevailed, and in the literature of that time, we find more scandalous instances, than at any other period, of the corruption of manners. Neither the *sirventes*, nor the *canzos* of the Troubadours, nor the *fabliaux* of the Trouvères, nor the romances of chivalry, can be read without a blush. The licentious grossness of the language is equalled, in every page, by the shameful depravity of the characters, and by the immorality of the incidents. In the south of France, more particularly, peace, riches, and a court life, had introduced, amongst the nobility, an extreme laxity of manners. Gallantry seems to have been the sole object of their existence. The ladies, who only appeared in society after marriage, were proud of the celebrity which their lovers conferred on their charms. They were delighted with becoming the objects of the songs of their Troubadour ; nor were they offended at

the poems composed in their praise, in which gallantry was often mingled with licentiousness. They even themselves professed the Gay Science, *el Gai Saber*, for thus poetry was called; and, in their turn, they expressed their feelings in tender and impassioned verses. They instituted Courts of Love, where questions of gallantry were gravely debated, and decided by their suffrages. They gave, in short, to the whole south of France the character of a carnival, affording a singular contrast to the ideas of reserve, virtue, and modesty, which we usually attribute to those good old times.

The more closely we look into history, the more clearly shall we perceive that the system of chivalry is an invention almost entirely poetical. It is impossible to distinguish the countries in which it is said to have prevailed. It is always represented as distant from us both in time and place; and whilst the contemporary historians give us a clear, detailed, and complete account of the vices of the court and the great, of the ferocity or corruption of the nobles, and of the servility of the people, we are astonished to find the poets, after a long lapse of time, adorning the very same ages with the most splendid fictions of grace, virtue, and loyalty. The Romance writers of the twelfth century placed the age of chivalry in the time of Charlemagne. The period when those writers existed, is the time pointed out by Francis I. At the present day, we imagine we can still see chivalry flourishing in the persons of Du Guesclin and Bayard, under Charles V. and Francis I. But when we come to examine either the one period or the other, although we find in each some heroic spirits, we are forced to confess that it is necessary to antedate the age of chivalry, at least three or four centuries before any period of authentic history.

We shall return to the invention of the chivalric fictions, when we speak of the literature of the country where the first romances of chivalry were composed, northern France, and more especially Normandy. The Provençals, at the commencement of their poetical career, were not yet acquainted with them. The compositions of their Troubadours were entirely lyrical, and not epic. They sang, but they did not recite; and chivalry, amongst them, existed rather in gallantry and sentiment than in the imagination. They must necessarily have been acquainted with all the rules of chivalry, before

they could form their compositions upon that model. On the most solemn occasions, in the disputes for glory, in the games called *Tensons*, when the Troubadours combated in verse, before illustrious princes, or before the Courts of Love, they were called upon to discuss questions of the most scrupulous delicacy and the most disinterested gallantry. We find them enquiring, successively, by what qualities a lover may render himself most worthy of his mistress ; how a knight may excel all his rivals ; and whether it be a greater grief to lose a lover by death or by infidelity. It is in these *Tensons* that bravery becomes disinterested, and that love is exhibited pure, delicate, and tender ; that homage to woman becomes a species of worship, and that a respect for truth is an article in the creed of honour. These elevated maxims and these delicate sentiments were mingled, it is true, with a great spirit of refining. If an example was wanted, the most extravagant comparisons were employed. Antitheses, and plays upon words, supplied the place of proofs. Not unfrequently, as is the case with those who aim at constructing a system of morals by the aid of talent alone, and who do not found it on experience, the most pernicious sentiments, and principles entirely incompatible with the good order of society and the observation of other duties, were ranked amongst the laws of gallantry. It is, however, very creditable to the Provençal poetry, that it displays a veneration for the beauties of chivalry, and that it has preserved, amidst all the vices of the age, a respect for honour and a love of high feeling.

This delicacy of sentiment amongst the Troubadours, and this mysticism of love, have a more intimate connexion with the poetry of the Arabians and the manners of the East than we should suspect, when we remember the ferocious jealousy of the Musulmans, and the cruel consequences of their system of polygamy. Amongst the Musulmans, woman is a divinity as well as a slave, and the seraglio is at the same time a temple and a prison. The passion of love displays itself, amongst the people of the South, with a more lively ardour, and a greater impetuosity, than in the nations of Europe. The Musulman does not suffer any of the cares, or the pains, or the sufferings of life, to approach his wife. He bears these alone. His harem is consecrated to luxury, to art, and to pleasure. Flowers and incense, music and dancing, perpet-

ually surround his idol, who is debarred from every laborious employment. The songs in which he celebrates his love, breathe the same spirit of adoration and of worship which we find in the poets of chivalry, and the most beautiful of the Persian *ghazèles* and the Arabian *cassides* seem to be translations of the verses or songs of the Provençals.

We must not judge of the manners of the Musulmans by those of the Turks of our day. Of all the people who have followed the law of the Koran, the latter are the most gloomy and jealous. The Arabians, while they passionately loved their mistresses, suffered them to enjoy more liberty ; and of all the countries under the Arabian yoke, Spain was that in which their manners partook most largely of the gallantry and chivalry of the Europeans. It was this country also which produced the most powerful effects on the cultivation of the intellect, in the south of Christian Europe.

Abdalrahman I. who detached Spain from the empire of the Abassides, and founded that of the Ommiades, commenced his reign at a period when the religious fanaticism of the Musulmans was considerably weakened. He introduced literature and the arts into the West, and in Spain they attained greater prosperity than in any other portion of the Musulman dominions. A complete toleration had been granted by the first conquerors to the Christian Goths, who, under the name of Moçarabians (mixed Arabians), lived in the midst of the Musulmans. Abdalrahman, who obtained and merited the name of the Just, respected the rights of his Christian subjects, and only sought to attach them to his empire by that prodigious superiority in arts, letters. sciences, and cultivation, which then distinguished the Arabians. The Christians, living amidst the Arabians, attempted to follow them in the career in which the latter had acquired such celebrity. Abdalrahman, who was the contemporary of Charlemagne, like him was the patron of letters ; but, more enlightened than that prince, he pursued, even in the civilization of the Christians themselves, a more beneficent and permanent policy than that of the French monarch. The study of the Arabic language was considered by the Moçarabians as the only means of developing their genius.* As

* Four princes of the name of Abdalrahman made a distinguished figure in Spain, from the middle of the eighth to the commencement

early as the middle of the ninth century, Alvaro of Cordova complains, in his *Indiculus luminosus*, that his countrymen have abandoned the study of their own sacred characters for those of the Chaldæans. John of Seville, for the convenience of those Christians who were better acquainted with the Arabian than the Latin, wrote in the former language an exposition of the sacred Scriptures. At the same period, a collection of the canons, according to the Church of Spain, was translated into Arabic; whilst, on the other hand, several treatises on the law and religion of the Arabians were composed in Spanish. Thus, throughout the whole extent of the Arabian dominions in Spain, the two languages were universally spoken, and, in this manner, the literature of the Arabians became familiar to the Christians of the West, without the latter being under the necessity of acquiring the Arabic tongue. The colleges and universities, founded by Abdalrahman and his successors, were frequented by all the learned of Europe. One of the most distinguished of these was Gerbert, who appears to have studied at Seville and Cordova, and who had acquired so intimate a knowledge of Arabian literature, and was so superior to his age, that after having been successively the admiration of France and Italy, and having ascended all the steps of the hierarchy, he filled the papal chair, from 999 to 1003, under the name of Sylvester II. Many others, and more particularly the restorers of the exact sciences in France, England, and Italy, in the

of the tenth century, and are easily confounded with one another. The first, Abdoul-Rahman-Ben-Abdoullah, was only a lieutenant or viceroy of the Caliph Yesid; and yet it was he who endangered France, and after having taken possession of half that country, was defeated in the plains of Tours, by Charles Martel, in 733. This is probably the same prince whom Ariosto, in imitation of the ancient Romance writers, has introduced, by an anachronism, as the antagonist of Charlemagne, under the name of Agramante. The second, the individual mentioned in the text, Abdoul-Rahman-Ben-Moawiah, was the only one of his family who escaped being massacred in 749, when the Ommiadan Caliphs, his ancestors, lost the throne of Damascus. He wandered as a fugitive for six years in the deserts of Africa, when Spain declared in his favour. He enjoyed a glorious reign from 756 to 787. Two of his descendants, Abdalrahman II. (822—852) and Abdalrahman III. (912—961) bore with no less virtue and prosperity the titles of Caliph of the West, and of Emin-El-Moumenym (Prince of the Faithful); and thus the most brilliant exploits, and the highest prosperity of the Moors of Spain, are connected with the name of Abdalrahman.

eleventh century, completed their studies, by a residence of longer or shorter duration, in some of the universities of the south of Spain. Campanus of Novara, Gerard of Carmona, Atelard, Daniel Morley, and many others, confess, in their writings, that they are indebted to the Arabians for all that they have communicated to the public.

The monarchy of the Ommiades gave way, in Spain, to a number of petty Moorish sovereignties, which, ceasing to make war upon one another, became rivals in the cultivation of the arts and of letters. A great number of poets were attached to the courts of the princes of Grenada, of Seville, of Cordova, of Toledo, of Valencia, and of Saragossa; and numbers of astronomers, physicians, and chroniclers enjoyed, at those courts, a distinguished rank and the favour of the sovereign. Amongst these many were Christians and Moçarabians, and many belonged, both by religion and birth, to the two languages and the two countries. Whenever they experienced any mortifications at the courts of the Moorish kings, or whenever they felt any apprehension for their liberty or their property, they fled, carrying with them their talents and their industry to the Christians, who received them like unfortunate brethren. The petty princes of the growing kingdoms of Spain, more especially those of Catalonia and Arragon, by which, until the year 1112, the Mussulman kingdom of Saragossa was surrounded, attached to their persons, the mathematicians, the philosophers, the physicians, and the Troubadours, or inventors of stories and songs, who had received their first education in the schools of Andalusia, and who entertained those courts by the tales and the works of fiction which they borrowed from the literature of the East. The union of the sovereignties of Catalonia and Provence, introduced these men of science and the Troubadours into the states of Raymond Berenger. The various dialects of the Romance were not then so distinct as they are at present, and the Troubadours passed with ease from the Castilian to the Provençal, which was then reputed the most elegant of all the languages of the South.*

* In a little work published in 1818, *On the Language and Literature of Provence*, Augustus William Schlegel attempts to disprove the influence of the Arabians on the civilization and poetry of the Provençals. He attributes to the Spaniards of the Middle Ages, and he

Thus it was that the nations of modern Europe were taught the art of poetry; and the rules which were imposed enable us to recognise the school from which it proceeded. The first rule, which may be called peculiar to modern poetry, was rhyme. The invention of rhyming the terminations of verses, or the middle of the verse with the termination, was unknown to the Greeks, though it is sometimes to be found in the classical Latin poets, where, however, it appears to have been admitted with a different view than that which we propose to ourselves by the use of rhyme. It was introduced less for the purpose of marking the verses than the sense; and it was formed merely by a coincidence in the construction of the sentence. One verb, or one noun, was placed in opposition to another, and the effect of the repetition was to indicate, by the ear, that the poet was pursuing analogous

has done so on other occasions, the intolerance and religious hatred which their descendants evinced, under the three Philips. History does not mention this aversion between the Spaniards and the Moors. Until the time of Alphonso X. of Castile, there was not a single reign in which some Christian prince did not take refuge at a Moorish court, or when a Moorish sovereign did not seek shelter from a Christian king. For a hundred and fifty years, we see at the courts of the two Rogers and the two Williams of Sicily, as well as at that of Frederick II., Arabian courtiers mingled with Italian, and the judges of all the provinces in the two Sicilies selected from amongst the Saracens. The two nations were intimately blended, in the south of Europe, during at least five centuries. M. Raynouard has produced proofs of the existence of the Romance language at Coimbra in Portugal, in the year 734, in an ordonnance of Alboacem, son of Mahomet Alhamar. At this very time, all the provinces of the south of France had been conquered by Abdalrahman. The taking of Toledo, in 1085, is not, then, the period which the Abbé Andres, M. Ginguené, or myself, have fixed as the æra of the Provençal poetry; nor does the discovery of the Romance poem of Boethius, anterior to the year 1000, give us the *coup de grace*. The taking of Toledo merely placed the most celebrated school of the Arabians in the power of the Christians. This school continued to spread the sciences of the Arabians in the West, long after the mixture of the courts had rendered their poetry familiar.

The influence of the Moors over the Latins is distinguishable in the study of science, philosophy, the arts, commerce, agriculture, and even religion. It would be strange then, indeed, if it did not extend to the songs which enlivened the festivals in which the two nations used to mingle, when we know how passionately fond they both were of music and poetry. The same air adapted by turns to Arabian and Romance words, necessarily required the same time in the stanza and the same distribution of the rhymes.

ideas for three or four verses, after which the rhyming was abandoned. The Latin poems of the Middle Ages are more frequently rhymed, even as early as the eighth or ninth century. But it must be recollected that the mixture of the Arabians and the Latins took place in the eighth century, and it would, therefore, be difficult to prove that the first rhymed Latin poetry was not borrowed from the Arabians. So, also, with regard to the German rhymed poetry, the most ancient poems which we find rhymed in couplets, are not near so early as the first poetical attempts, which were always in rhyme, of the Arabians, or, indeed, as the first known intercourse between the two nations. It is very possible that the Goths, on their invasion of Europe, may have introduced the use of rhyme from those Eastern countries whence they issued. But the most essential and antique form of versification, amongst the Teutonic nations, was borrowed from the Scandinavians, and consisted in alliteration, and not in rhyme. This alliteration is the repetition of the same letters at the commencement of the words, and not of the same sound at the termination. The Niebelungen, which was written early in the thirteenth century, is rhymed in couplets, and almost, it may be said, in the French style. But the same poem, in the Icelandic traditions, which was versified in the ninth or tenth century, is not rhymed.*

The consonants held a very important place in the languages of the North, which abound in them, as do the vowels in those of the South. Alliteration, therefore, which is but a repetition of the consonants, is the ornament of the Northern tongues; while *assonance*, or the rhyming of the terminating vowels, is peculiar to the popular verses of the nations of the South, although the practice has been reduced into a system only amongst the Spaniards.

Rhyme, then, which was essential to all the poetry of the Arabians, and was combined by them in various ways to

* The following is an example of the alliterations which supplied the place of rhyme. The lines are from the German imitation of Fouqué:

*H*ell ver*h*eissen
*H*at's mein o*h*eim,
*K*urz mein *L*eben *k*ühn mein *L*ust;
*R*asch mein *r*ache,
*R*aub de*r* ausgang,
Fliessend blut im Ni***flu***ngenstam.

please the ear, was introduced by the Troubadours into the Provençal language, with all its variations of sound. The most usual form in Arabic poetry, is the rhyming in couplets; not making the two accordant lines rhyme simply with one another, unconnected with the preceding or subsequent rhymes, as in the poetry of the Niebelungen, or in our heroic verse; but rhyming every other line together, so that the rhyme is continued through the whole stanza, or the whole poem. This is, likewise, the most ancient form of Spanish poetry. A well-known poem of the Emperor Frederick I. proves that the same order of rhymes was employed by the Provençals. This emperor, who spoke almost all the languages of his time, met Raymond Berenger II. Count of Provence, at Turin, in 1154, and bestowed on him the investiture of his fiefs. The count was accompanied by a great number of the poets of his nation, of whom almost all were amongst the principal nobility of his court. They delighted Frederick by the richness of their imaginations, and the harmony of their verses. Frederick repaid their attentions by the following lines.*

A Frenchman I'll have for my cavalier,
And a Catalonian dame,
A Genoese for his honour clear,
And a court of Castilian fame;
The Provençal songs my ear to please,
And the dances of Trevisan,
I'll have the grace of the Arragonese,
And the pearl of Julian;
An Englishman's hands and face for me,
And a youth I'll have from Tuscany.

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* Plas mi cavalier Francez,
E la donna Catalana,
E l'onrar del Ginoes,
E la court de Castellana,
Lou cantar Provençalez.
E la danza Trevisana,
E lou corps Aragones,
E la perla Juliana,
La mans e kara d'Angles,
E lou donzel de Toscana.

[The above translation is borrowed from one of the very able articles on the Poetical Literature of Spain, which have appeared in the Retrospective Review, and which are, we believe, correctly attributed to the pen of Mr. Bowring.—*Tr.*]

In Arabic poetry, also, the second verse of each couplet frequently terminates with the same word, and this repetition has been, likewise, adopted by the Provençals. A remarkable example of it may be found in some verses of Geoffrey de Rudel, a gentleman of Blieux in Provence, and one of those who were presented to Frederick Barbarossa, in 1154. The occasion on which these lines were composed was an extraordinary one, and very illustrative of the wildness of the imagination and manners of the Troubadours. The knights, who had returned from the Holy Land, spoke with enthusiasm of a Countess of Tripoli, who had extended to them the most generous hospitality, and whose grace and beauty equalled her virtues. Geoffrey Rudel, hearing this account, fell deeply in love with her, without having ever seen her; and prevailed upon one of his friends, Bertrand d'Allamanon, a Troubadour like himself, to accompany him to the Levant. In 1162, he quitted the court of England, whither he had been conducted by Geoffrey the brother of Richard I., and embarked for the Holy Land. On his voyage, he was attacked by a severe illness, and had lost the power of speech, when he arrived at the port of Tripoli. The countess, being informed that a celebrated poet was dying of love for her, on board a vessel which was entering the roads, visited him on shipboard, took him kindly by the hand, and attempted to cheer his spirits. Rudel, we are assured, recovered his speech sufficiently to thank the countess for her humanity, and to declare his passion, when his expressions of gratitude were silenced by the convulsions of death. He was buried at Tripoli, beneath a tomb of porphyry, which the countess raised to his memory, with an Arabic inscription. I have transcribed his verses *on distant love*, which he composed previous to his last voyage. The French version, which I have added to this Provençal fragment, has no pretensions to poetry, but is merely to be considered as an attempt to preserve the measure and rhymes of the original. It is the Provençal itself, with its repetitions, its refinement, its occasional obscurity, though, at the same time, with its simplicity, composed in obedience to rules peculiar to itself but foreign to us, which it is my object to give. If I had wished to translate the Provençal into French verse, I must have paid a very different degree of attention

to the construction of our language, and to its poetical character.*

Angry and sad shall be my way,
If I behold not her afar.
And yet I know not when that day
Shall rise, for still she dwells afar.
God ! who hast formed this fair array
Of worlds, and placed my love afar,
Strengthen my heart with hope, I pray,
Of seeing her I love afar.
Oh, Lord ! believe my faithful lay,
For well I love her though afar,
Though but one blessing may repay
The thousand griefs I feel afar.
No other love shall shed its ray
On me, if not this love afar,
A brighter one, where'er I stray
I shall not see, or near, or far.

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* [The original Provençal, and M. de Sismondi's version, are both given below. The attempt which the Translator has made to present these singular verses in an English dress, is, he is aware, a very imperfect one.—*Tr.*]

Irat et dolent m'en partray
S'ieu non vey cet amour de luench,
Et non say qu' oura la veray
Car sont trop noutras terras luench.
Dieu que fez tout quant van e vay
Et forma aquest amour luench
My don poder al cor car hay
Esper vezer l'amour de luench.
Segnour, tenes mi pour veray
L'amour qu'ay vers ella de luench
Car pour un ben que m'en esbay
Hay mille mals, tant soy de luench.
Ja d'autr'amour non jauzirai
S'ieu non jau dest'amour de luench
Qu'una plus bella non en say
En luez que sia ny prez ni luench.

Irrité, dolent partirai,
Si ne vois cet amour de loin,
Et ne sais quand je le verrai,
Car sont par trop nos terres loin.
Dieu, qui toutes choses as fait,
Et formas cet amour si loin,
Donne force à mon cœur, car ai
L'espoir de voir m'amour au loin.

Ah !

But the Troubadours did not always adhere to this form, which is essentially of Arabic invention. They varied their rhymes in a thousand different ways. They crossed and intertwined their verses, so that the return of the rhyme was preserved throughout the whole stanza; and they relied on their harmonious language, and on the well exercised ears of their readers, for making the expectation of the rhyme, and its return after many verses, equally productive of pleasure. In this manner, they have always appeared to me to have been completely masters of rhyme, and to have treated it as their own peculiar property; whilst the Germans, who pretend to have communicated it to them, managed it in the most timid manner, even in the twelfth century, rhyming their lines together, two and two, when they ought to have rhymed them alternately; as though they feared that, in a language so heavy as their own, two rhymes, not immediately connected, would be lost. Still less did they attempt to restore the rhyme after an interval of several lines. It is true, that at a later period, in the thirteenth century, the Minnesingers, or reciters of love-songs, the Troubadours of Germany, imitated this play upon the rhymes, and all the difficult variations which they saw in use amongst the Provençals.

Rhyme was the very groundwork of the Provençal poetry, whence it crept into the poetry of all the other nations of modern Europe. But it did not constitute all the requisites of verse. The number and the accentuation of the syllables were substituted by the Provençals, in imitation of the Arabians, as far as we can judge, in the place of the quantity or the emphasis, which formed the basis of Greek and Latin verse. In the languages of antiquity, each syllable had, in the pronunciation, a sound, the duration of which was invariably fixed. The relative duration of these sounds was likewise determined by an exact standard; and, all the syllables being distributed into two classes of long and short,

Ah! Seigneur, tenez pour bien vrai
L'amour qu'ai pour elle de loin,
Car pour un bien que j'en aurai,
J'ai mille maux, tant je suis loin.
Ja d'autr'amour ne jouirai,
Sinon de cet amour de loin,
Qu'une plus belle je ne'n sçais,
En lieu qui soit ni près ni loin.

the versification was founded on this primary classification, and very much resembled the measure in music. The verse was formed of a certain number of measures which were called feet, and which marked the rise and fall of the tune, which always comprised the same time, and, whatever variation there might be in the sound of the pronunciation, the line still preserved the same uniform measure. This mixture of different feet gave the Greeks and Romans a prodigious number of verses, of various lengths and measures, in which it was essentially necessary to arrange the words in such a manner, that the ear might be struck by the equality of the time, and by the uniform cadence of the sounds. In none of the Romance languages can the ear distinguish the syllables into long and short, or assign them a precise and proportionate quantity. Accent, in them, supplies the place of quantity. In all of them, with the exception of the French, there is some one syllable, in every word, upon which the stress of pronunciation is laid, and which seems to determine the predominant sound of the word. The Provençal in particular, is strongly accentuated. The Troubadours, perceiving this, and being probably unacquainted with the harmony of Latin verse, produced something analogous to it in their own poetry, by mixing accentuated with unaccentuated syllables. The ear alone was their guide, for they did not, in their poetry, attempt to imitate the classical authors. Indeed, they ill understood the rules which they themselves obeyed, and would have found it difficult to communicate them. The organization of their verse was more simple than that of the ancients. They only employed a measure which consisted of two syllables unequally accentuated, and that of two kinds, the trochee, consisting of a long and short syllable, and the iambic, of a short and a long; and they preferred for constant use, and for the ground-work of their verse, the iambic, as did afterwards the Italians. The Spaniards, on the contrary, in their ancient poetry, made choice of the trochee, and preserved also, in their heroic poetry, *los versos de arte mayor*, the dactyl, consisting of a long and two short syllables, or the amphibrach, of a long syllable between two short ones. But it must not be supposed that the Provençals, the Spaniards, and the Italians, or even the Greeks and Romans, took any extraordinary pains in the selection of the syllables,

so as to place the long and short syllables alternately and in the requisite order. Certain parts of the line required an accent or a long syllable. There were thus two or three syllables in each verse, as the fourth or the sixth, the eighth and the tenth, the quantity and position of which were fixed; and, in consequence of the regular proportion in the modern languages, between the accentuated and the unaccentuated syllables, the former naturally drew the others into their proper places and communicated the measure to the verse.

These syllables, the quantity of which is fixed in the modern languages, are those which mark the cæsura, those which correspond with it, and those which terminate the verse. The cæsura is that point of rest which the ear, in accordance with the sense, determines in the middle of the line, dividing it into two parts of uniform proportion. In the verse of ten syllables, which is most frequently met with in the Romance languages, this point, which ought naturally to occur after the fourth syllable, may, according to the taste of the poet, be deferred to the sixth; and it is one branch of the art, so to intermix these unequal proportions as to prevent the ear from being fatigued with the too great monotony of the verse. When the cæsura is placed regularly after the fourth syllable, that syllable ought to be strongly accentuated; so ought the eighth, with which it corresponds at an equal distance; and the same is to be observed with regard to the tenth syllable, upon which the voice dwells, at the end of the verse. In those verses, in which this disposition of the accents is varied, and the first hemistich is longer than the second, the cæsura falls upon the sixth syllable, which ought to be accentuated as well as the tenth. When all the equal syllables are accentuated, it almost necessarily happens that the unequal ones are not so, and the verse naturally divides itself into five iambics. The poet has only the power of sometimes substituting a trochee in the place of the first and third foot, or of the first and second; and the quantity of the line cannot be false, unless when the fourth, the eighth, and the ninth, or the sixth and the tenth, are not accentuated.*

* However fatiguing these details may appear, I have thought it necessary to add, in a note, some examples, drawn from different languages, for the benefit of those only who are desirous of seriously studying the laws of versification, in foreign languages. In fact, the prosody

I must claim the indulgence of the reader, for these dry and fatiguing details, into which I am compelled to enter. The laws of versification which the Troubadours discovered,

which the Provençals invented, is universally adopted in the modern languages, with the exception of the French. The French, who are strangers to these rules, are inclined to deny their existence. They judge of the verse of other nations by their own. They count the syllables and observe the rhyme, but whilst they neglect the study of the prosody, it is impossible for them to feel that harmony of language to which poetry owes its most powerful effects.

In prosody, two marks are employed; the one (—) distinguishes the long or accentuated syllables; the other (⏑) the short syllables. These I have placed over the corresponding syllables in the verse, and I have divided the hemistich after the cæsura by this mark (=).

Lo jorn que us vi = o donna primament
Quant a vos plac = que us mi laisest vezer
Parti mon cor = tot autre pensamen,
E forum ferm en vos = tuit mei voler
Que sim passez = Donna en mon coi l'enveia
A un dolz riz = et ab un dolz esgard
Mie quant es = mi fezes oblidar

Arnaud de Marveilh.

In the Provençal verses, at least in those of ten syllables, the quantity is more difficult to fix, since the poet has the choice of such a variety of measures, and has only one, or at most two feet, in the verse, the quantity of which is determined. Still it is always the variation of the accent which gives the verse its harmony.

The same rules apply, without exception, to all the other modern languages; and the Italian verses, for instance, ought to be scanned, on the Provençal principle, thus:

Miser chi mal o pran = do si con fida
Ch' ognor star deb = bia il malefizio occulto,
Che quando ogn'altro tac = cia intorno grida
L'aria e la terra stes = sa in ch' è sepulto.

Ariosto.

It should be remarked, that the cæsura often divides a word in the middle, but, in this case, the accent is on the first syllable; and thus, the mute syllable which follows, being scarcely sounded, re-attaches itself to the first hemistich. The lines, in Italian, terminate almost

are of very general application. They extend to the literature of all those nations, of which I propose to treat. They have been adopted by all the countries of the south, and by

always with a mute syllable, so that they are composed of five iambics and a half. The Spanish and Portuguese verses, after the time of Charles V., are perfectly similar.

Solo y penso = so en prados y desiertos
Mis passos doy = cuy dolos y cansados
Y entrambos o = jos traygo levantados
A ver no vea alguien = mis desconciertos.

Boscan.

De tamanhas victo = rias triumphava
O velho Afon = so Principe subido
Quando quem tudo em fim = vencendo andava
Da larga e muita ida = de foi vencido.

Camoens.

But the Spanish or Portuguese *redondilha,* employed in romances, songs, and dramatic dialogues, is composed of trochees, which are the inverse of the iambics.

Sentose el conde a la mesa
No cenava ni podia
Con sus hijos al costado
Que muy mucho los queria.

Romance d'Alarcos.

Canta o caminhante ledo
No caminho trabalhoso
Por entre o espesso arvoredo
E de noite o temeroso.
Cantando refrea o medo.

Camoens, Redondilhas.

The ancient heroic verse of the Spanish and Portuguese, which they call *verso de arte mayor,* was composed of four dactyls or amphibrachs, or of three dactyls and a spondee.

Como

most of the people of the north of Europe. This structure of the verse, this mechanical part of poetry, is singularly connected, by some secret and mysterious associations, with our feelings and our emotions, and with all that speaks to our imaginations and our hearts. It would be wrong, in studying the divine language of poetry, to regard it merely as the trammels of thought. Poetry excites our emotions, and awakens or captivates our passions, only because it is something which comes more home to our bosoms than prose; something, which seizes upon our whole being, by the senses as well as by the soul, and impresses us more deeply than language alone could do. Symmetry is one of the properties of the soul. It is an idea which precedes all knowledge, which is applicable to all the arts, and which is inseparable from our perceptions of beauty. It is by a principle, anterior to all reflection, that we look, in buildings, in furniture. and

Como no creo que fossen menores
De los Africanos los hechos del Cid?
Ni que feroces menos en la lid
Entrassen los nuestros que los Agenores?

Juan de Mena, Labyrintho.

Lastly, the English heroic, and the German dramatic verse, completely resemble the Provençal and Italian iambic of ten syllables. The former I have scanned.

Now morn her rosy steps = in th' eastern clime
Advancing sowed = the earth with orient pearl
When Adam wak'd = so custom'd, for his sleep
Was airy light = from pure digestion bred.

Milton, however, is not so easy to scan, as he often attempted to imitate the Latin prosody in his English verses. Of all modern prosodies, the German is the most fixed, for it always agrees with the grammar.

Ha welche wonne fliesst = in diesem blick
Auf einmal mir = durch alle meine Sinnen!
Ich fuhle inn' = ge heil'ges Lebens gluck,
Neu gluhend mir = durch nerv und adern rinnen.

Goëthe, Faust.

in every production of human art, for the same proportion which the hand of Nature has so visibly imprinted on the figure of man and of the inferior animals. This symmetry, which is founded on the harmonious relation of the parts to the whole, and is so different from uniformity, displays itself in the regular return of the strophes of an ode, as well as in the correspondence of the wings of a palace. It is more distinguishable in modern poetry than in that of antiquity, in consequence of the rhyme, which harmonizes the different parts of the same stanza. Rhyme is an appeal to our memory and to our expectations. It awakens the sensations we have already experienced, and it makes us wish for new ones. It encreases the importance of sound, and gives, if I may so express myself, a colour to the words. In our modern poetry, the importance of the syllables is not measured solely by their duration, but by the associations they afford ; and vowels, by turns, slightly, perceptibly, or emphatically marked, are no longer unnoticed, when the rhyme announces their approach and determines their position. What would become of the Provençal poetry, if we perused it only to discover the sentiment, such as it would appear in languid prose ? It was not the ideas alone which gave delight, when the Troubadour adapted his beautiful language to the melodious tones of his harp ; when, inspired by valour, he uttered his bold, nervous, and resounding rhymes ; or, in tender and voluptuous strains, expressed the vehemence of his love. The rules of his art, even more than the words in which he expressed himself, were in accordance with his feelings. The rapid and recurring accentuation, which marked every second syllable in his iambic verses, seemed to correspond with the pulsations of his heart, and the very measure of the language answered to the movements of his own soul. It was by this exquisite sensibility to musical impressions, and by this delicate organization, that the Troubadours became the inventors of an art, which they themselves were unable to explain. They discovered the means of communicating, by this novel harmony, those emotions of the soul, which all poets have endeavoured to produce, but which they are now able to effect, only by following the steps of these inventors of our poetical measures.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE STATE OF THE TROUBADOURS. AND ON THEIR AMATORY AND MARTIAL POEMS.

THE Counts of Provence were not the only sovereigns, amongst those of the south of France, at whose court the Langue d'Oc, or Romance Provençal, was spoken, and where the reciters of tales, and the poets, who had been formed in the Moorish schools, found a flattering reception and sure protection. At the conclusion of the eleventh century, one half of France was governed by independent princes, whose only common bond was the Provençal language, which was spoken alike by them all. The most renowned of these sovereigns were, the Counts of Toulouse, the Dukes of Aquitain, of the house of Poitou, the Dauphins of Viennois and of Auvergne, the Princes of Orange, of the house of Baux, and the Counts de Foix. After these, came an infinite number of viscounts, barons, and lords, who in some petty province or town, or even castle, enjoyed the prerogatives of sovereignty. To these inferior courts, the physicians, the astrologers, and the reciters of tales, resorted, in pursuit of fortune, and introduced into the North an acquaintance with the learning and the arts of Spain. Their highest ambition, probably, was to amuse the leisure of the great, and to please them by their flatteries. The recompense which they promised themselves, and which they received alike from the Christian and Moorish princes, was the permission to take a part in the festivals, to which they gave animation by their recitals and their songs, and to accept the presents of rich habits and of horses which were there bestowed upon them. But it was to heroes they addressed themselves; and as they sung of love and glory, their verses, penetrating to the inmost hearts of their hearers, communicated to them the deep emotion which swelled within the poet's own bosom. It was thus that the subject of their songs gave an elevation to their characters, and that the fugitives from the Moorish territories

became the instructors of princes. Scarcely had the art of song been introduced into southern France, and the rules of versification been invented, when poetry became the recreation of the most illustrious men. The lyric form, which it had received from the Arabians, rendered it proper to convey only the noblest sentiments. In verse, the poet sang his love, his martial ardour, and the independence of his soul; and no sovereign sate upon so proud a throne, as not to think himself honoured in the capacity of expressing such sentiments. The amorous monarchs celebrated their mistresses in verse; and when the first sovereigns of Europe had thus assumed their rank, amongst the poets or Troubadours, there was not a single baron or knight, who did not think it his duty to superadd to his fame, as a brave and gallant man, the reputation of a gentle Troubadour. To these poetical pursuits, nothing more was necessary, than a perception of what is musical and harmonious. In obedience to this faculty, the words naturally fell into the order most agreeable to the ear, and the thoughts, the images, and the sentiments, acquired that general accordance and melodious congruity which seem to proceed from the soul, and to which study can add nothing. It is astonishing to observe what very slight traces of learning, the poetry of the Troubadours displays. No allusion to history or mythology; no comparison, borrowed from foreign manners; no reference to the sciences or the learning of the schools, are mingled with their simple effusions of sentiment. This fact enables us to comprehend, how it was possible for princes and knights, who were often unable to read, to be yet ranked amongst the most ingenious Troubadours.

Several public events materially contributed to enlarge the sphere of intellect of the knights of the Langue d'Oc; to make enthusiasm, rather than interest, their spring of action; to present a new world to their eyes, and to strike their imaginations with extraordinary images. Never does a nation display a more poetical character, than when some great and uncommon circumstances operate upon minds, yet endowed with all the vigour of youth.

The first of these events was the conquest of Toledo, and of all New Castile, by Alfonso VI. King of Castile. That monarch, who was then seconded by the hero of Spain, the Cid Rodriguez, or Ruy Diaz de Bivar, invited a number of

French, Provençal and Gascon knights, who were connected with him by his marriage with Constance of Burgundy, to take part in the expedition, in which he was engaged from 1083 to 1085, and the result of which more than doubled his territories, and confirmed the preponderance of the Christians in Spain. This was the first war against the infidels, in which, for two hundred years, the French had been engaged, and it preceded, by forty years, the preaching of the first crusade. The warriors, gathered together in one army from various states, finding themselves thus in the midst of stranger nations, became still more deeply attached to glory. The fame of the Cid was pre-eminent above that of every other man of his age. The Moorish and Castilian poets had already begun to celebrate it, and to prove how well their popular songs were calculated to spread the renown of their heroes. The conquest of Toledo, also, mingled the Moors and the Christians in a more intimate manner. A complete toleration was granted to such of the Moors as remained subject to the King of Castile ; and Alfonso engaged, even by oath, to permit them to use the cathedral as a mosque. Of this, however, he afterwards deprived them, at the solicitation of his wife, and in obedience to a pretended miracle. From this period, even until the reign of Philip III., for the space of 530 years, Toledo always contained a numerous Moorish population, intermingled with the Christians. This city, one of the most celebrated universities of the Arabians, retained its schools and all its learned institutions, and spread, amongst the Christians, the knowledge of Eastern letters. The Moç-Arabians assumed a rank in the court and the army, and the French knights found themselves residing amongst men, whose imagination, intellect, and taste, had been developed by the Saracens. When, after the capture of Toledo, on the 25th of May, 1085, they returned from this glorious expedition, they carried back with them, into their own country, a portion of that cultivation of mind, which they had witnessed in Spain.

The second circumstance, which contributed to impress a poetical character on the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was the preaching of the crusade in 1095, and the continued communication, which was in consequence established, between Christendom and the Levant. The crusade appears to have

been preached with much zeal in the countries of the Langue d'Oc. Clermont d'Auvergne, where the council was held, was within that territory. The Pontifical Legate at the crusade, the Bishop of Puy, the Count of Toulouse, Raymond de Saint-Gilles, and the Duke of Acquitain, William IX. Count of Poitou, were at that time the principal sovereigns of the south of France, and amongst the most distinguished of the Crosses. Of all the events recorded in the history of the world, there is, perhaps, not one of a nature so highly poetical as the crusades; not one, which presents a more powerful picture of the grand effects of enthusiasm, of noble sacrifices of self-interest, which is ever prosaic in its nature, to faith, sentiment, and passion, which are essentially poetical. Many of the Troubadours partook of the enthusiasm of their countrymen, and accompanied them to the crusade. The most distinguished of these poets as well as warriors, was William IX. Count of Poitou, and Duke of Acquitain, the oldest of the poets, whose works M. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye has collected. He was born in 1071, and died in 1127. The famous Eleanor, Queen of France, and afterwards of England, who, when divorced by Louis le Jeune, transferred the sovereignty of Guienne, Poitou, and Saintonge, to Henry II. of England, was grand-daughter to this prince.

The succession of the kings of England to the sovereignty of a considerable part of the countries where the Langue d'Oc prevailed, was the third great political event which influenced the manners and opinions of the people, and consequently of the Troubadours also, by mingling the different races of men, introducing poets to the courts of the most powerful monarchs, and extending to literature something of that national interest, to which the long rivalry between the Kings of France and England had given rise. On the other hand, the encouragement given to the Troubadours, by the kings of the house of Plantagenet, had a great influence on the formation of the English language, and furnished Chaucer, the father of English literature, with his first model for imitation.

This language was adopted, at one and the same time, by the sovereigns of one half of Europe. We find Provençal verses composed by the Emperor of Germany, Frederick Barbarossa, Richard I. of England, Alfonso II. and Peter III

of Aragon, Frederick III. of Sicily, the Dauphin of Auvergne, the Count de Foix, the Prince of Orange, and the Marquis of Montferrat, King of Thessalonica. It well deserved the preference which it obtained over all other languages. The grammar was regular and complete; the verbs had the same inflexions which the Italian verbs have at the present day, and even more.* The regularity of their moods allowed the suppression of the pronouns, and thus added to the rapidity of the expression. The substantives had a quality peculiar to this language, of being employed either as masculines or as feminines, at the option of the writer.† The flexibility of the substantives gave the language a more figurative character. Inanimate beings were clothed with a sex at the will of the poet, and were by turns masculine and fierce, or sweet and voluptuous, according to the gender which was assigned to them. The substantives, as well as the adjectives, had terminations which expressed all the modifications, both of augumentation and diminution, which denoted either agreeable or disagreeable ideas, contempt, ridicule, or approbation. This is still the case in the Italian and Spanish; whilst, in French, the diminutives have become solely expressive of the ridiculous, and augmentatives are no longer known. The Provençal language, as we now find it written, appears to us to be studded with consonants, but most of those which terminated the words were suppressed in the pronunciation. On the other hand, almost all the diphthongs were pronounced with the two sounds united in the same syllable (for example, *daürada*, and not *dorada*), which gave greater fulness and richness to the language. A great

* As, for instance, a peculiar gerund—*tout-barjan*, signifying the duration of the act of speaking; *espandiguen*, the duration of the act of extending.

† Thus they said *lou cap*, or *la capa*, the head; *l'os*, or *l'ossa*, the bone; *un fais*, or *una faissa*, a burden; *lou rusc*, or *la rusca*, the bark; *lou ram*, or *la rama*, the foliage; *unfielh*, or *unafielha*, a leaf, &c.

Another peculiarity of this language, which is not to be found in any other, is its having preserved, instead of declensions, a sign which distinguishes the nominative and the vocative from the other cases. In general the nominative singular has its termination in *s*, which is abandoned in the other singular cases; whilst the nominative plural wants the *s*, and the other plural cases have it. Some words have their termination in *aire* in the nominative, and in *ador* in other cases: *E. Trobaire diz al Trobador*—the Troubadour said to the Troubadour.

number of the words were figurative, and expressed their signification in their sound. Many were peculiar to the language, and can only be translated by employing a periphrasis.*

This beautiful language was exclusively employed, for a long time, in those compositions to which it was so peculiarly appropriate—in amatory and martial songs. The multitude of Provençal poems which are extant, may be classed under one or the other of these two divisions; and although they bear different names, they all of them equally belong to the lyrical style of composition. Love and war furnished the only occupation, the only delight of all the kings and soldiers, of the most powerful barons and the most humble knights of the age. Now kneeling at the feet of their mistresses, whom they often addressed in language applicable only to the Deity, and now braving their enemies, their verses bear the double imprint of their pride of character and of the power of their love. The poems of the Provençals, according as they expressed the one or the other of these passions, were divided into *chanzos* and *sirventes*. The object of the former was gallantry; of the latter, war, politics, or satire. The structure of both was the same. The Provençal songs were, in general, composed of five stanzas and an envoy. The form of the stanza was perfectly regular, and often so uniform, that the same rhyme was repeated in the same place in each stanza. These rhymes were distinguished, as in the French, into masculine and feminine; that is to say, into those accentuated on the last syllable, and those on the penultimate; and were dexterously interwoven, not so as to follow one another in the regular order of our poetry, but in such a manner that their disposition always produced a harmony, conformable to the sense of the verse and the feelings of the hearer. This original perception of harmony afterwards gave place, it is true, to the refinement of affecting to vanquish difficulties, and the Troubadours, by imposing upon themselves rules which were both ridiculous and difficult to obey, with regard to the return of the same rhymes, or of the same words at the termination of the verses, contracted a puerile habit of playing with words, to which they too often sacrificed both

* See M. Fabre D'Olivet, Preface to his *Poésies Occitaniques*.

the idea and the sentiment. They displayed a more delicate and correct taste in the choice of the different metres which they employed; in the mixture of long and short verses, from the heavy Alexandrine to the lines of one or two syllables; and in the skilful use of the regular terminations in the stanza. All our knowledge upon this subject is derived from their experience. It was they who invented those varied measures of the stanzas, which give so much harmony to the *canzoni* of Petrarch. We are likewise indebted to them for the forms of the French ode, and particularly for the beautiful stanza of ten lines, in one quatrain and two tercets, which J. B. Rousseau has employed in his most elevated subjects. Some sonnets are also found in their language, but, at the same time, it appears to me, that they are posterior to the earliest Italian sonnets, and even to those of Petrarch. Lastly, the ballad, the first verse of which is converted into a burthen for the others, and in which the return of the same thought produces such a graceful and pleasing effect, is of Provençal origin.

It is my wish rather to familiarize my readers with the Troubadours themselves, and to make them acquainted with their poems, than to detail the opinions which have been entertained respecting them, and the romances of which they have been the heroes. But of all the poems which it will be necessary for us to notice, these are the least likely to produce an impression in a translation. We must not look, in them, for that wit and that faculty of invention, which in modern poetry shed such brilliancy upon the ideas, by ingenious contrasts and by happy reflections of light. Nor must we look for profound thoughts. The Provençals were too young a nation, they had seen too little, and they had not sufficiently analyzed and compared what they saw, to entitle them to lay any claim to the empire of thought. Invention seems to have been out of the question in so narrow a field, and in compositions which never dwelt on more than two sentiments. Their merit entirely consists in a certain harmony and simplicity of expression, which cannot be transferred to another language. I have therefore been obliged, whenever I have wished to give an idea of their imagination and their sensibility, or of the charm and elegance of their style, to direct the attention of my readers to their personal

character. It is not in my power to awaken, for their talents, an admiration which can only be felt by those who thoroughly understand their language; but without judging of them as poets, their adventures may yet excite our interest. The connexion, between a romantic life and the wild imaginations of the poet, is not altogether ideal. Such of the Troubadours as were regarded as the most celebrated men of their day, were likewise those who had met with the most renowned adventures. The poet has always been a hero to his biographer. The latter has ever persuaded himself that the most beautiful verses were addressed to the most beautiful women; and as time has passed away, our imaginations have invested the Troubadour knight with new glories.

No one has experienced this good fortune in an equal degree with Sordello of Mantua,* whose real merit consists in the harmony and sensibility of his verses. He was amongst the first to adopt the ballad-form of writing, and in one of those, which has been translated by Millot, he beautifully contrasts, in the burthen of his ballad, the gaieties of nature, and the ever-reviving grief of a heart devoted to love.† Sordel, or Sordello, was born at Goïto, near Mantua, and was, for some time, attached to the household of the Count of S. Bonifazio, the chief of the Guelph party, in the march of Treviso. He afterwards passed into the service of Raymond Berenger, the last Count of Provence of the house of Barcelona. Although a Lombard, he had adopted, in his compositions, the Provençal language, and many of his countrymen imitated him. It was not, at that time, believed that the Italian was capable of becoming a polished language. The age of Sordello was that of the most brilliant chivalric virtues, and the most atrocious crimes. He lived in the midst of heroes and monsters. The imagination of the people was still haunted by the recollection of the ferocious Ezzelino, tyrant of Verona, with whom Sordello is said to have had a contest, and who was, probably, often mentioned in his verses. The historical monuments of this reign of blood were, however, little known, and the people mingled the name of their favourite poet with every revolution which had

* [See *Parnasse Occitanien*, I. 145. *Tr.*]

† Aylas e que m'fan miey huelh
Quar no vezon so qu'ieu vueilh.

excited their terror. It was said that he had carried off the wife of the Count of S. Bonifazio, the sovereign of Mantua, that he had married the daughter or sister of Ezzelino, and that he had fought this monster, with glory to himself. He united, according to popular report, the most brilliant military exploits to the most distinguished poetical genius. By the voice of Saint Louis himself, he had been recognized, at a tourney, as the most valiant and gallant of knights; and, at last, the sovereignty of Mantua had been bestowed upon this noblest of the poets and warriors of his age. Historians of credit have collected, three centuries after Sordello's death, these brilliant fictions, which are, however, disproved by the testimony of contemporary writers. The reputation of Sordello is owing, very materially, to the admiration which has been expressed for him by Dante; who, when he meets him at the entrance of Purgatory, is so struck with the noble haughtiness of his aspect, that he compares him to a lion in a state of majestic repose, and represents Virgil as embracing him, on hearing his name. M. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye has collected thirty-four poems of Sordello's. Fifteen of these are love-songs, and some of them are written in a pure and delicate style. Amongst the other pieces, is a funeral eulogium on the Chevalier de Blacas, an Aragonese Troubadour, whose heart, Sordello says, should be divided amongst all the monarchs in Christendom, to supply them with the courage of which they stand in need. At the same time, we find amongst the compositions of Sordello, some pieces, little worthy of the admiration which has been bestowed upon his personal character, and not altogether in accordance with the delicacy of a knight and a troubadour. In one, he speaks of his success in his amours, with a kind of coarse complacency, very far removed from the devotion which was due to the sex from every cavalier. In another, he thus replies to Charles of Anjou, who pressed him to follow him to the crusade. "My lord Count, you ought not to ask me, in this manner, to affront death. If you want an expert seaman, take Bertrand d'Alamanon, who understands the winds, and who wishes for nothing better than to be your follower. Every one is seeking his salvation by sea; but, for my own part, I am not eager to obtain it. My wish is, to be transported to another life as late as possible." In a *tenson*, in which he

is an interlocutor, he sustains the least heroic side of the question. The *Tensons*, or *jeux partis*, were songs, in dialogue, between two speakers,* in which each interlocutor recited successively a stanza with the same rhymes. The other party who, in this *tenson*, disputes with Sordello, is the same Bertrand d'Alamanon, whom, as I have just related, he recommended as a crusader.

"SORDELLO. If it were necessary either to forego the delight of lady-love, and to renounce the friends whom you possess or may possess, or to sacrifice to the lady of your heart, the honour which you have acquired, and may acquire, by chivalry, which of the two would you choose?"

"BERTRAND. The mistresses whom I have loved, have despised me so long, and so little have I gained by them, that I cannot compare them to chivalry. Yours may be the folly of love, the enjoyment of which is so frail. Still continue to chase the pleasures, which lose their value as soon as tasted. But I, in the career of arms, ever behold before me new conquests and new glories.

"SORDELLO. What is glory without love? How can I abandon joy and gallantry for wounds and combats? Thirst and hunger, a burning sun or piercing frost, are these to be preferred to love? Ah! willingly do I resign to you these benefits, for the sovereign joys which my mistress bestows.

"BERTRAND. What! dare you then appear before your mistress, if you dare not draw your sword for the combat? Without valour, there is no real pleasure; it is valour which elevates man to the highest honours, but love is the degradation and the fall of those whom he seduces.

"SORDELLO. Let me but be brave in the eyes of her I love, and I heed not the contempt of others. From her, all my happiness flows; I seek for no other felicity. Go then, overthrow your castles and your walls, while I enjoy the sweet kisses of my mistress. You may gain the esteem of all noble Frenchmen; but, for my part, I prize more her innocent favours, than all the achievements of the lance.

* [Sometimes the interlocutors were more than two, in which case it was called a Torneyamen. A specimen of this species of composition is given by M. Raynouard, vol. ii. p. 199. The interlocutors are, Savari di Mauleon, Hugues de la Bachelerie, and Gaucelm Faidit. A paraphrase is given by Millot. *Tr.*]

"BERTRAND. But, Sordello, to love without valour, is to deceive her whom you love.. I would not wish for the love of her I serve, did I not at the same time merit her esteem. A treasure, so ill acquired, would be my grief. Do you, then, be the protector of the follies of love, whilst the honour of arms is mine ; since you are so deluded as to place false joys in the balance against real happiness."

This *tenson* may, perhaps, give an idea of those poetical contests, which were the great ornament of all festivals. When the haughty baron invited to his court the neighbouring lords and the knights his vassals, three days were devoted to jousts and tourneys, the mimicry of war. The youthful gentlemen, who, under the name of pages, exercised themselves in the profession of arms, combated the first day ; the second was set apart for the newly-dubbed knights ; and the third, for the old warriors. The lady of the castle, surrounded by youthful beauties, distributed crowns to those who were declared, by the judges of the combat, to be the conquerors. She then, in her turn, opened her court, constituted in imitation of the seignorial tribunals, and as her baron collected his peers around him, when he dispensed justice, so did she form her Court of Love, consisting of young, beautiful, and lively women. A new career was opened to those who dared the combat, not of arms but of verse, and the name of *Tenson*, which was given to these dramatic skirmishes, in fact signified a contest.* It frequently happened that the knights, who had gained the prize of valour, became candidates for the poetical honours. One of the two, with his harp upon his arm, after a prelude, proposed the subject of the dispute. The other then advancing, and singing to the same air, answered him in a stanza of the same measure, and very frequently having the same rhymes. This extempore composition was usually comprised in five stanzas. The court of love then entered upon a grave deliberation, and discussed, not only the claims of the two poets, but the merits of the question ; and a judgment or *arrêt-d'amour* was given, frequently in verse, by which the dispute was supposed to be decided. At the present day, we feel inclined to believe that these dialogues, though little resembling those of Tityrus and Melibæus, were yet, like those, the production

* [According to Raynouard, it was derived from CONTENTIO. *Tr.*]

of the poet sitting at ease in his closet. But, besides the historical evidence which we possess of the Troubadours having been gifted with those improvisatorial talents, which the Italians have preserved to the present times, many of the *tensons* extant bear evident traces of the rivalry and animosity of the two interlocutors. The mutual respect, with which the refinements of civilization have taught us to regard one another, was at this time little known. There existed not the same delicacy upon questions of honour, and injury returned for injury was supposed to cancel all insults. We have a *tenson* extant, between the Marquis Albert Malespina and Rambaud de Vaqueiras, two of the most powerful lords and valiant captains, at the commencement of the thirteenth century, in which they mutually accuse one another of having robbed on the highway and deceived their allies by false oaths. We must charitably suppose, that the perplexities of versification and the heat of their poetical inspiration compelled them to overlook sarcasms, which they could never have suffered to pass in plain prose.

Many of the ladies, who sate in the Courts of Love, were able themselves to reply to the verses which they inspired. A few of their compositions only remain, but they have always the advantage over those of the Troubadours. Poetry, at that time, aspired, neither to creative energy, nor to sublimity of thought, nor to variety. Those powerful conceptions of genius which, at a later period, have given birth to the drama and the epic, were yet unknown; and, in the expression of sentiment, a tenderer and more delicate inspiration naturally endowed the productions of these poetesses with a more lyrical character. One of the most beautiful of these songs is written by Clara d'Andusa, and is unfinished. A translation is subjoined, which can give but little idea of a poem, the excellence of which so essentially consists in the harmony of the verse.*

Into what cruel grief and deep distress
The jealous and the false have plunged my heart,
Depriving it by every treacherous art
Of all its hopes of joy and happiness:

* [The French prose translation given by M. de Sismondi, is by M. Fabre d'Olivet, *Poésies Occitaniques*, vol. vii. p. 32. The original,

For they have forced thee from my arms to fly,
Whom far above this evil life I prize;
And they have hid thee from my loving eyes.
Alas! with grief, and ire, and rage I die.

Yet they, who blame my passionate love to thee,
Can never teach my heart a nobler flame,
A sweeter hope, than that which thrills my frame,
A love, so full of joy and harmony.
Nor is there one—no, not my deadliest foe,
Whom, speaking praise of thee, I do not love,
Nor one, so dear to me, who would not move
My wrath, if from his lips dispraise should flow.

Fear not, fair love, my heart shall ever fail
In its fond trust—fear not that it will change
Its faith, and to another loved one range;
No! though a hundred tongues that heart assail—

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which follows, is extracted from the *Parnasse Occitanien*, vol. i. p. 253 —*Tr.*]

En greu esmai et en greu pessamen
An mes mon cor, et en granda error
Li lauzengier el fals devinador,
Abaissador de joi e de joven;
Quar vos, qu ieu am mais que re qu'el mon sia
An fait de me departir e lonhar
Li qu' ieu nous pose vezer in remirar,
Don muer de dol e d' ir' e de feunia.

Cel que m blasma vostr' amor ni m defeu
Mo podon far en re mon cor melhor,
Ni'l dous desir qu 'ieu ai de vos major,
Ni l'enveja. ni 'l dezir ni 'l talen.
E non es hom, tan mos enemics sia,
Si 'l n'aug dir ben, que no 'l tenha en car;
E si' n ditz mal, mais no m pot dir ni far,
Neguna re quez à plazer me sia.

Ja nous donets, bels amics, espaven
Quez ieu ves vos aia cor trechador,
Ni queus camge per nul autr' amador
Si m pregavon d'autras domnas un ceu;
Qu 'amors que m te per vos eu sa bailia,
Vol que mon cor vos estuj'e vos gar;
E farai o: e s'ieu pogues emblar
Mon cors, tals l' a que jamais no l 'auria.

Amics, tan ai d'ira e de feunia
Quar no vos vei, que quant ieu cug cantar
Plang e sospir; per qu' ieu no pose so far
A mas cobias que 'l cor complir volria.

For Love, who has my heart at his command,
Decrees it shall be faithful found to thee,
And it *shall* be so. Oh, had I been free,
Thou, who hast all my heart, hadst had my hand.

Love ! so o'ermastering is my soul's distress,
At not beholding thee, that, when I sing,
My notes are lost in tears and sorrowing,
Nor can my verse my heart's desires express.

We have already said that the *Sirventes*, which constitute the second class of Provençal poems, were martial and political songs. At a period, when almost all the poets were knights likewise, and when the love of combats, and the infatuation of dangers, were the prominent passions of the soul, we naturally look to the martial songs for instances of the noblest inspiration. Thus, Guillaume de Saint-Gregory, in an harmonious *sirvente*, in stanzas of ten lines, like those of our odes, celebrates his love of war, and seems to feel the inspiration of the field of battle.*

The beautiful spring delights me well,
When flowers and leaves are growing;
And it pleases my heart, to hear the swell
Of the birds' sweet chorus flowing
In the echoing wood ;
And I love to see all scatter'd around,
Pavilions and tents, on the martial ground ;
And my spirit finds it good
To see, on the level plains beyond,
Gay knights and steeds caparison'd.†

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* [This *Sirvente* is attributed by M. Raynouard to Bertrand de Born, *Poésies de Troubadours*, ii. 209, and in the *Parnasse Occitanien*, i. 65, where a different version of it is given. The text is taken from M. Raynouard, and for the translation the editor is indebted to the kindness of a friend.—*Tr.*]

† Be m play lo douz temps de pascor,
Que fai fuelhas e flors venir ;
E play mi quant aug la vaudor
Dels auzels que fan retentir
Lor chan per lo boscatge ;
E plai me quan vey sus els pratz,
Tendas e pavallos fermatz ;
E plai m'en mon coratge ;
Quan vey per campanhas rengatz
Cavalliers ab cavals armatz.

E play

It pleases me, when the lancers bold
Set men and armies flying;
And it pleases me, too, to hear around
The voice of the soldiers crying;
And joy is mine,
When the castles strong besieged shake,
And walls uprooted totter and quake.
And I see the foe-men join
On the moated shore, all compass'd round
With the palisade and guarded mound.
* * * *

Lances and swords, and stained helms,
And shields dismantled and broken,
On the verge of the bloody battle-scene,
The field of wrath betoken;
And the vassals are there,
And there fly the steeds of the dying and dead:
And where the mingled strife is spread,
The noblest warrior's care
Is to cleave the foeman's limbs and head,
The conqueror less of the living than dead.

I tell you that nothing my soul can cheer,
Or banqueting or reposing,
Like the onset cry of "charge them" rung
From each side, as in battle closing;
Where the horses neigh,

E play mi quan li corredor
Fan las gens els aver fugir;
E plai me quan vey aprop lor
Gran ren d'armatz ensems brugir;
E ai gran alegratge,
Quan vey fortz castels assetjatz,
E murs fondre e derolatz;
E vey l'ost pel ribatge
Qu'es tot entorn claus de fossatz,
Ab lissas de fortz pals serratz.

Atressi m play de bon senhor,
Quant es primiers a l'envazir,
Ab caval armat, çes temor;
C'aissi fai los sieus enardir,
Ab vallen vassallatge;
E quant el es el camp intratz,
Quascus deu esser assermatz,
E segr el d'agradatge,
Quan nulhs hom non es rea prezatz
Tro qu'a manhs colps pres e donatz.

Lansas e brans elens de color,
Escutz trancar e desguarnir,

Veyrem

And the call to "aid" is echoing loud,
And there, on the earth, the lowly and proud
In the foss together lie;
And yonder is piled the mingled heap
Of the brave that scaled the trench's steep.

Barons! your castles in safety place,
Your cities and villages, too,
Before ye haste to the battle-scene:
And, Papiol!* quickly go,
And tell the Lord of "*Yes and No*,"†
That peace already too long hath been!

This warlike ode is dedicated to Beatrix of Savoy, the wife of Raymond Berenger V. the last Count of Provence. Beatrix was the mother of four queens of France, of Germany, of England, and of Naples. Like her husband, she was a great patroness of the Troubadours, and some verses of this illustrious couple are still preserved, which are wanting neither in poetical skill nor in delicacy. The lines written by the countess are addressed to her lover, in which she

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Veyrem a l'intrar, de l'estor,
E manhs vassalhs ensems ferir
Don anaran a ratge,
Cavalhs dels mortz e dels nafratz;
E la pus l'estorn er mesclatz;
Negus hom d'aut paratge
Non pens mas d'asclar caps e bratz
Que mais val mortz que vius sobratz.

Je us die que tan no m'a sabor
Mangars ni beure in dormir,
Cum a quant aug cridar; a lor!
D'ambas las partz; et aug agnir!
Cavals voitz per l'ombratge,
Et aug cridar: aidatz! aidatz!
E vei cazer per los possatz
Paues e grans per l'erbatge;
E vei los mortz que pels costazt
Au los tronsons outre passatz.

Baros, metetz en gatge,
Castels e vilas e ciutatz,
Enans q'usquecs no us guerreiatz
Papiol, d'agradatge,
Ad oc e no, ten vai viatz,
Dic li que trop estan en patz.

---

* The name of the Troubadour's *Jongleur*, or page.
† Richard Cœur de Lion.

reproaches him with being too reserved and timid. For the honour of the princess, we must suppose that this reproach is a mere sally of wit.

But the war, of all others, most fitted to inspire a poet, was the crusade. Whilst the preachers, from every pulpit, announced salvation to those who should shed their blood to deliver the tomb of Christ, the Troubadours, who partook of the same enthusiasm, were still more strongly influenced by the new and strange adventures, which the fairy realms of the East promised them. Their imaginations wandered with delight over those romantic countries, and they sighed as well for the conquest of that terrestrial paradise, as for that which was promised them in heaven. Many of them were, however, detained in Europe by the bonds of love; and the contests between these two passions, these two religions of their hearts, frequently gave an interesting character to the poems which were composed to animate the crusaders. This conflict is no where more agreeably described than in a *tenson* between Peyrols and Love. Peyrols was a knight of slender fortune, from the neighbourhood of Roquefort in Auvergne.* His distinguished talents for poetry introduced him to the court of the Dauphin of Auvergne. He there fell passionately in love with the sister of that prince, the Baroness de Mercœur; and the Dauphin prevailed upon his sister to return the passion of his Troubadour, in order to encourage those poetical talents which were the ornament of his court. Neither the Baroness nor the Troubadour were able rigorously to preserve the strict bounds of a poetical attachment; and Peyrols, who for a considerable time had only celebrated, in his verse, the cruelty of his mistress. at length sang the victories and the exultation of a happy lover. The Baron de Mercœur was offended. The Dauphin resented the injury which he believed his brother-in-law had sustained, and Peyrols was banished. Other attachments succeeded this first love, which are also celebrated in his verses. The preaching of the second crusade changed, at once, his mode of life. The following is his dialogue with Love, the original of which has been published by M. Fabre d'Olivet, who has

* [Three poems by Peyrols are given in the *Parnasse Occitanien* i. 88, and six, in Raynouard, iii. 268.—*Tr.*]

happily mingled in his "Court of Love" many ancient fragments with his own verses.*

Love! I long have been your slave,
Till my heart is broken;
What is the reward I have?
Where, my duty's token?

Peyrols! can you then forget
That same blooming Beauty,
Whom with such delight you met,
Swearing love and duty?
That's the way I paid the debt!
Let me tell you, your light heart
Tender thoughts disperses;
When you act the lover's part
You falsify your verses.

Love! I've still been true to you,
And if now I leave you,
'Tis what I am forced to do;
Do not let it grieve you.
Heaven will see me safely through!
Heaven, too, make the kings agree!
Keep them both from fighting!
Lest Saladin their folly see
Which he'll take delight in.

Peyrols! do the best you will,
You alone can't save it;
Every Turk you cannot kill,
That storms the Tower of David;
Here remain and sing your fill!
You're not wanted by the kings;
Stay then and amuse you,
They're so fond of quarrelings
They can well excuse you.

Love! I've felt your power depart;
Though my fair one's beauty
Lingers still about my heart,
Yet I'll do my duty.
Many a lover now must part;
Many hearts must now begin
To feel their sad griefs springing.
Which, but for cruel Saladin,
Had joyously been singing.

Peyrols did, in fact, visit the Holy Land, and a *sirvente*, composed by him in Syria, after the Emperor Frederic Bar-

* [The original of this curious poem is not given by M. de Sismondi. It is to be found, with some variations, in the *Parnasse Occitanien*, vol. i. p. 90, and likewise in Raynouard, iii. 279. *Tr.*]

barossa had lost his life, and the Kings of England and France had abandoned the Crusade, is still preserved.

I have seen the Jordan river,
  I have seen the holy grave;
Lord! to thee my thanks I render
  For the joys thy goodness gave,
Shewing to my raptured sight,
The spot wherein thou saw'st the light.

Vessel good, and favouring breezes,
  Pilot trusty, soon shall we
Once more see the towers of Marseilles
  Rising o'er the briny sea.
Farewell, Acre! farewell, all
Of Temple or of Hospital!

Now, alas! the world's decaying—
  When shall we once more behold
Kings like lion-hearted Richard—
  France's monarch, stout and bold—
Montferrat's good Marquis—or
The Empire's glorious Emperor!

Ah! Lord God, if you believed me,
  You would pause in granting powers
Over cities, kingdoms, empires,
  Over castles, towns, and towers;
For the men that powerful be
Pay the least regard to thee.*

The poem terminates with a violent invective against the reigning emperor. This was caused by the treacherous conduct of Henry VI., who detained in his prisons Richard Cœur de Lion, when, on his return from the crusade, after having been shipwrecked on the coast of Istria, he was seized, as he traversed Germany, in the disguise of a pilgrim, by Leopold, Duke of Austria, in 1192. Richard, who was the hero of the age; who had humbled Tancred and Philip Augustus; who, in a short space of time, had conquered the island of Cyprus, and had bestowed that kingdom on the unfortunate Lusignan; who had vanquished Saladin in a pitched battle, and had dispersed the innumerable armies of the East; who had inspired such terror into the infidels, that his name alone was long the signal of affright; who had remained, after the return of all the other sovereigns from the crusade, and had

* [The Translator has been unable to discover the original of this *Sirvente;* the lines in the text are, therefore, only a version of the French prose translation.]

alone commanded the Christian host ; and who had signed the treaty, in virtue of which the pilgrims were allowed to accomplish their long journey to the Holy Sepulchre—Richard was equally dear to all the Crosses. They pardoned the vices and the ferocity, which were inseparable from the manners of the age. They reproached him not with the odious massacre of all the prisoners whom he had captured from Saladin; and, in short, they seemed to think that so much valour might dispense with all other virtues. But, above all, Richard was dear to the Troubadours. Himself a royal poet and knight, he united in his own person all the brilliant qualities of the age. He was a bad son, a bad husband, a bad brother, a bad king ; but he was the most valiant and intrepid warrior in the army. His companions in arms loved him with a kind of idolatry. The devotion of William des Préaux, one of his followers, saved him, contrary to all expectation, from a Saracen prison. He was sleeping under the shade of a tree in Syria, with six of his knights, when he was surprised by a troop of the enemy. He had only time to mount his horse, and defend himself with his accustomed bravery ; and four of his companions having fallen, he was on the point of being taken prisoner, when William des Préaux, seeing his master's danger, exclaimed in Arabic, "Spare me ! I am the King of England!" The Saracens, who had not suspected that a prisoner of such importance was in their power, threw themselves immediately on Des Préaux, that they might all claim a share in the capture, and paid no attention to Richard, who gallopped away. Fauchet asserts, that he likewise owed his liberty in Germany to the zeal of his minstrel, Blondel ; and this is the story which has been dramatised. We cannot help regretting that this tale has been ranked amongst the apocrypha of history. Henry VI., according to Fauchet, carefully concealed the fact of his having detained the King of England as a prisoner, lest he should incur the excommunication of the Crusaders, Blondel, who had been shipwrecked with him on the coast of Istria, and who had sought him in all the fortresses of Germany, sang, beneath the tower in which he was confined, a *tenson* which he and Richard had composed in common. Scarcely had he finished the first stanza, when Richard commenced the second. Blondel, having discovered his master, carried into England the

tidings of his captivity, and engaged his brother to treat for his ransom. If this *tenson*, which delivered the King of England from captivity, had been preserved, it might have been some confirmation of an anecdote to which we are so willing to give credit. We do, however, possess a *sirvente* which he composed in prison, after fifteen months' captivity.* The uniform and masculine rhymes, no doubt, augmented, to the ear of Richard, the melancholy of his verses.

* It is not known in what language this song was originally written, for the different manuscripts in which we find it, with many variations, give it in the Provençal and Langue d'Oil. It seems to me an agreeable task to compare, in the words of the brave King Richard, the two languages which so long divided France between them. Below, I have given the two first verses in Provençal, from a manuscript of M. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, and also the entire song in old French, together with the sixth stanza, and an envoy, from a manuscript in the Royal Library.

Jà nul hom près non dirà sa razon
Adreitamen, se come hom doulen non ;
Mas per conort pot el faire canson.
Prou ha d'amicz, ma paûre son li don !
Honta y auran se por ma rehezon
Souy fach dos hivers prez.

Or sachan ben mici hom e mici baron,
Anglés, Norman, Peytavin et Gascon,
Qu'yeu non hai ja si paûre compagnon
Que per avé, lou laissesse en prezon ;
Faire reproch, certas yeu voli non,
Mas souy dos hivers prez.

La ! nus homs pris ne dira sa raison
Adroitement, se dolantement non,
Mais por effort puet-il faire chançon ;
Moût ai amis, mais poure sont li don,
Honte i auront se por ma reançon
Sui ca dos yvers pris.

Ce sevent bien mi home et mi baron
Ynglois, Normans, Poitevin et Gascon,
Que je n'ai nul si pauvre compaignon
Que por avoir je lessaisse en prison.
Je vous di mie por nule retraçon.
Car encore sui pris.

Or sai-je bien de voir certeinement
Que je n'ai pu ne ami ne parent,
Quand on me faut por or ou por argent,

Moût

SONG, BY RICHARD I.

WRITTEN DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT IN THE TOUR TENEBREUSE, OR BLACK TOWER.

No wretched captive of his prison speaks,
Unless with pain and bitterness of soul,
Yet consolation from the Muse he seeks,
Whose voice alone misfortune can control.
Where now is each ally, each baron, friend,
Whose face I ne'er beheld without a smile?
Will none, his sovereign to redeem, expend
The smallest portion of his treasures vile?

Though none may blush that, near two tedious years,
Without relief, my bondage has endured,
Yet know, my English, Norman, Gascon peers,
Not one of you should thus remain immur'd:

Moût m'est de moi, mais plus m'est de ma gent
Qu'après lor mort aurai reprochement
Si longuement sui pris.

N'est pas mervoilh, se j'ai le cuer dolent
Quand mes sire mest ma terre en torment,
S'il li membrast de notre sacrement
Que nos feismes à Deus communement,
Je sai de voir que ja trop longuement
Ne serie ca pris.

Que sevent bien Angevin et Lorain,
Al Bacheler qui or sont riche et sain,
Qu'encombrés suis loing d'eux en autre main,
Fort moût m'aidessent, mais il n'en vient grain
De belles armes sont ore vuit et plain,
Porce que je suis pris.

Mes compagnons que j'amoie et que j'am,
Ces de Chacu, et ces de Percheram,
Di lor chançon qu'il ne sunt pas certam,
C'onques vers eux ne vi faus cuer ne vam,
S'ils me guerroient il feront que vilam,
Tant com je serai pris.

Contesse suer votre pris soverain,
Vos saut et gart, al acunement elaim,
Et porce suis-je pris.
Je ne di mie a cele de chartain
La mere Loeys.

[The English translation given in the text is taken from Burney's History of Music, vol. ii. p. 238. The original, as given by him, which frequently varies from the copy in the foregoing note, is to be found in the preface to the *Roman de la Tour Tenebreuse*, printed at Paris in 1705. *Tr.*]

The meanest subject of my wide domains,
Had I been free, a ransom should have found;
I mean not to reproach you with my chains,
Yet still I wear them on a foreign ground!

Too true it is—so selfish human race!
"Nor dead nor captive, friend or kindred find;"
Since here I pine in bondage and disgrace,
For lack of gold my fetters to unbind;
Much for myself I feel, yet ah! still more
That no compassion from my subjects flows:
What can from infamy their names restore,
If, while a prisoner, death my eyes should close

But small is my surprise, though great my grief,
To find, in spite of all his solemn vows,
My lands are ravaged by the Gallic chief,
While none my cause has courage to espouse.
Though lofty towers obscure the cheerful day,
Yet, through the dungeon's melancholy gloom,
Kind Hope, in gentle whispers, seems to say,
"Perpetual thraldom is not yet thy doom."

Ye dear companions of my happy days,
Of Chail and Pensavin, aloud declare
Throughout the earth, in everlasting lays,
My foes against me wage inglorious war.
Oh, tell them, too, that ne'er, among my crimes,
Did breach of faith, deceit, or fraud appear;
That infamy will brand to latest times
The insults I receive, while captive here.

Know, all ye men of Anjou and Touraine,
And every bach'lor knight, robust and brave,
That duty, now, and love, alike are vain,
From bonds your sovereign and your friend to save:
Remote from consolation, here I lie,
The wretched captive of a powerful foe,
Who all your zeal and ardour can defy,
Nor leaves you aught but pity to bestow.

We have only two *sirventes* by Richard, and the second is not very worthy of remark. But a knight, who was intimately connected with that monarch, and whose ungoverned passions had a powerful influence over the destiny of the royal family of England, Bertrand de Born,* Viscount of

* [Three poems, by Bertrand de Born, are given in the *Parnasse Occitanien*, i. 65, two of which are likewise given by *Raynouard*, i. 135. In addition to these, a number of other poems by Bertrand de Born will be found in the fourth volume of M. Renouard's work, which has been recently published. *Tr.*]

Hautefort, in the diocese of Périgeux, has left a number of original poems, which, it is much to be regretted, have never been printed in the original language. The most ardent and impetuous of the French knights, he breathed nothing but war. Exciting and inflaming the passions of his neighbours or of his superiors, in order to rouse them to combat, he agitated, by intrigues and arms, the provinces of Guienne, during the latter half of the twelfth century, and in the reigns of the English monarchs, Henry II. and Richard I. In every new war in which he engaged, he animated his soldiers, encouraged his allies, and sustained his own hopes, by disburdening his mind, in a *sirvente*, of those passions which had prompted him to take up arms. Having attempted to despoil his brother Constantine of his share of their paternal inheritance, Richard Cœur de Lion, who was then only Count of Poitou, took the latter under his protection ; and Bertrand de Born, on account of this war, composed the first of those *sirventes*, in which he has, with such truth, pourtrayed that inflexible soul, which no dangers could cast down, nor any violence subdue. "What," says he, "are happy or evil days to me ? What are weeks or years ? At all times my desire is to destroy those who offend me. Let others embellish their mansions, if they will ; let them surround themselves with all the conveniences of life—but, for me, my sole desire is to collect lances and casques, and swords and horses. . . . . I am disgusted with the advice they give me ; and, by Jesus, I know not to whom to listen. They tell me I am imprudent in refusing peace, but were I to accept it, who is there that would not call me coward ?" At the conclusion of this war, Bertrand de Born, being irritated against Richard, who had ravaged his territories, attached himself to the eldest brother of that prince, Henry Duke of Guienne, the heir apparent to the crown of England. On all sides, he roused the enemies of Richard, and formed powerful leagues against him, while, with all the martial ardour of Tyrtæus, he sang anew the combats to which he was leading his allies. "Ventadour and Comborn, Ségur and Turenne, Montfort and Gordon, have made a league with Périgueux. The citizens labour at the intrenchments of their towns. The walls are rising around them. Let me strengthen their resolution with a *sirvente!* What glory awaits us. . . . Should a crown be

offered me, I should blush not to enter into this alliance or to desert it." Being soon afterwards abandoned by Henry, he composed a *sirvente* against him, and addressed another to Richard, who, after having besieged him in his castle, and forced him to capitulate, had generously restored to him his property. Shortly after this time, Henry died, in 1183 ; and Bertrand, who had again leagued himself with him, and had engaged him in a second revolt against his father, celebrated his praises in some *sirventes*, which breathe the tenderest affection. "I am devoured," says he, "with a grief, which will end but with my life. There is no longer any joy for me ; I have lost the best of princes. Great God ! you have snatched him from the age, and our wickedness has but too well merited it. Noble Henry ! it was reserved for you, to be the king of the courteous and the emperor of the brave !" The death of his friend, the prince, left Bertrand exposed to great danger. Henry II. with the forces of two kingdoms, besieged the lord of a little castle in Hautefort. Bertrand defended himself to the last extremity, until, the walls falling around him, he was taken prisoner with his garrison. But, when he was led before the king, and reminded the monarch, by a single word, of the tender friendship which he had enjoyed with the young prince, the unfortunate father burst into tears, and in the name of the son whom he had lost, restored to him his castle, his fief, and his riches.

These reverses could not discourage the high spirit of Bertrand de Born. Scarcely had he escaped one danger, when he provoked new enemies. He wrote many *sirventes* against Alfonso II. of Aragon, in which he endeavoured to excite his subjects to rebellion. He likewise took an active part in the war between Richard and Philip Augustus ; and when it appeared to relax, he rekindled it with his verses, in which he alternately roused the shame of the one sovereign or the other, by imputations of cowardice.

This ardent warrior, whose whole life was spent in the field, was not, however, insensible to the passion of love ; and here his success was not unworthy of his glory in arms. He was attached to Helen, the sister of King Richard, who afterwards married the Duke of Saxe, and was the mother of the Emperor Otho IV. Richard beheld, with pleasure, his sister, celebrated by so valiant a warrior and so illustrious a

Troubadour. Nor was Helen insensible to the homage of a man, who was even more distinguished by his talents than by his rank. Only one of the songs, which Bertrand composed in honour of this princess, has survived. It was written in the camp, at a time when the army was without provisions; and the Troubadour endeavoured to forget his hunger, in poetry and love. He was afterwards passionately attached to Maenz de Montagnac, the daughter of the Viscount de Turenne, and wife of Taleyrand de Périgord. His love was returned, and he was recognized by the lady as her knight; but jealousy disturbed their enjoyments. To her, in order to exculpate himself from a charge of infidelity, he addressed a song, which appears to possess much originality. It places before us the real knight of former times, all busied in war and the chase, the labour and the delight of our fathers, successively appealing to every thing that is dear to him in life, to every thing which has been the study of his youth and of his riper age, and yet esteeming them all light, in comparison with love.

* I cannot hide from thee, how much I fear
The whispers breathed by flatterers in thine ear,
Against my faith. But turn not, oh! I pray,
That heart so true, so faithful, so sincere,
So humble and so frank, to me so dear,
Oh lady! turn it not from me away.

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* The following is the original apology of Bertrand de Born:—unfortunately, many of the verses have been corrupted by the transcribers, to the injury both of the sense and the prosody.

Jeu m escondic que mal non mier
De so qu' eus an de mi dig lauzengier.
Per merce' us pres c' om nom puezca mezclar
Lo vostre cor fin lial vertadier
Humilz e francz e plazentier
Ab mi Dona per messonjas comtar.

Al premier get perd'ieu mon esparvier,
Que'l m'ausian al ponh falcon lanier
E porton l'en qu'iel lor veya plumar,
Si non am mais de vos lo cossirier
No faz d'autra jauzir lo desirier
Que 'm don s'amor ni' m retenh 'al colcar.

Autr' escondig vos farai pus sobrier,
E non m' en puesc onrar, pus encombrier,

So may I lose my hawk, ere he can spring,
Borne from my hand by some bold falcon's wing,
Mangled and torn before my very eye,
If every word thou utterest does not bring
More joy to me than Fortune's favouring,
Or all the bliss another's love might buy.

So, with my shield on neck, mid storm and rain,
With vizor blinding me and shorten'd rein,
And stirrups far too long, so may I ride,
So may my trotting charger give me pain,
So may the ostler treat me with disdain,
As they who tell those tales have grossly lied.

When I approach the gaming board to play,
May I not turn a penny all the day,
Or may the board be shut, the dice untrue,
If the truth dwell not in me, when I say
No other fair e'er wiled my heart away,
From her I've long desired and loved—from you.

Or, prisoner to some noble, may I fill
Together with three more, some dungeon chill
Unto each other odious company;
Let master, servants, porters, try their skill,
And use me for a target if they will,
If ever I have loved aught else but thee.

So may another knight make love to you,
And so may I be puzzled what to do;
So may I be becalmed 'mid oceans wide;
May the king's porter beat me black and blue,
And may I fly ere I the battle view,
As they, that slander me, have grossly lied.

Bertrand de Born was reconciled to Maenz de Montagnac by another celebrated woman of that time, Dame Natibors, or

---

S' ieu anc falli ves vos, veys, del pensar.
Can serem sols en cambro dins vergier,
Falham poders de vos mon companhier
De tal guiza que nom puesc aiudar.

Escut al col cavalq' ieu al tempier,
E port salat capairon traversier,
E regnas brevs que non quesc alongar,
Et estrueps loncs, e caval mal trotier,
Et al ostal truep irat lo stalier,
Si no us menti quien o aves comtar.

S' ieu per jaugar m' asseti al taulier
Ja no y puesca baratar un denier,
Ma ab taula presa non puesca intrar,
Anz giet a dez lo reir azar derrier;
S' ieu mais autra dona am ni enquier
Mais vos, cuy am, e dezir, e tem car

Tiberge de Montauzier, herself a poetess, and one whose praises had frequently been sung by the Troubadours. Disgusted with the world, he, at last, retired into a monastery, where he died, after having assumed the habit of a Cistercian monk. But the history of the great men of this age does not terminate with their lives. The terrible fictions of Dante, before whom they are, as it were, placed in judgment, seem to possess a sort of reality; and Bertrand de Born, who, as a poet and warrior, had played so brilliant a part, and exercised such noxious influence over his contemporaries, was not likely to be passed over in neglect, by the bard of the *Divina Comedia*. The poet, in fact, meets him in hell. He beholds, with horror, a body advancing without a head, or rather holding its head by the hair, in its right hand. The severed head is raised by the hand, and thus addresses the poet:

——— "Now, behold
This grievous torment, thou, who breathing goest
To spy the dead: behold, if any else
Be terrible as this. And that on earth
Thou may'st bear tidings of me, know that I
Am Bertrand, he of Born, who gave King John
The counsel mischievous. Father and son
I set at mutual war. For Absalom
And David, more did not Ahitophel,
Spurring them on maliciously to strife.
For parting those so closely knit, my brain
Parted, alas! I carry, from its source,
That in this trunk inhabits. Thus the law
Of retribution fiercely works in me."

Inferno, Canto xxviii.

Senher sia ieu de Castel parsonier,
Si qu' en la tor siam quatre parsonier,
E l' un l' autre noc aus pusiam amar,
Anz m'aion obs tos temps albalestrier
Mètre, sirvens, e gaitas, e portier,
S' ieu anc ai cor d' autra dona amar.

Ma Don' aim lais per autre cavayer
E pueis no say a que m' aia mestier,
E falham vens quant iray sobre mar;
En cort de Rey mi batan li portier,
En encocha fasa l' fogir primier,
Si no us menti quien m' an ot encusar.

A als envios se mentitz lauzengier
Pus ab mi dons m' aves encombrier
Ben lauzera quen laisaretz estar.

NOTE.

M. de Sismondi has announced his intention of devoting his attention, hereafter, to the production of a similar work on the Literature of the North. He will, probably, there give an account of the poets who, in Germany, under the name of Minnesingers, were equally prolific with the Troubadours, during precisely the same æra. The emperors of the Suabian line were great patrons of the Muses. M. de Sismondi has cited a little piece, usually attributed to Frederic Barbarossa. Their connexion with Italy, Sicily, and Provence, unites the German literature of that age so intimately with that of the southern dialects, that it would have been very desirable if all could have been brought under one view, to illustrate their mutual affinities and influences. So popular was the German Muse, that there are even instances of Italian poets composing in that language, as well as in the Provençal.

In comparing the poetic merits of the Troubadours and Minnesingers, it seems impossible to avoid differing from the opinion expressed by M. de Sismondi, and awarding the palm to the latter. They partake very little of the metaphysical speculations, and refinements of the Troubadours, while the harmony and grace of their versification are pre-eminent. The unbounded gaiety with which it revels in the charms of nature, and the spirit of tenderness and affection which it displays, give their poetry charms which very seldom adorn that of their rivals.

The translator trusts that he may be excused for adding two specimens of the lighter pieces of these "singers," for which, as well as for a few of the translations of the Troubadours, inserted in this work, he is indebted to the papers of a friend, who, for the purpose of bringing all the contemporary songsters of this age into one view, is preparing a volume for publication. It is entitled, "Specimens selected and translated from the Lyric Poetry of the German Minnesingers or Troubadours of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, illustrated by similar Selections and Translations from the Poets of the Provençal and other Southern Dialects."

The following Song is the production of Dietmar von Aste.

There sate upon the linden tree
A bird, and sang its strain;
So sweet it sang, that as I heard
My heart went back again.
It went to *one* remember'd spot,
It saw the rose-trees grow,
And thought again the thoughts of love
There cherish'd long ago.

A thousand years to me it seems,
Since by my fair I sate;
Yet thus to be a stranger long,
Is not my choice, but fate:
Since then I have not seen the flowers,
Nor heard the bird's sweet song:
My joys have all too briefly past,
My griefs been all too long.

The following song of Earl Conrad of Kirchberg, is translated very closely, and in the same measure as the original:

May, sweet May, again is come;
May, that frees the land from gloom.
Children, children, up and see
All her stores of jollity!
O'er the laughing hedgerows' side
She hath spread her treasures wide;
She is in the greenwood shade,
Where the nightingale hath made
Every branch and every tree
Ring with her sweet melody:
Hill and dale are May's own treasures,
Youth, rejoice in sportive measures;
Sing ye! join the chorus gay!
Hail this merry, merry May!

Up, then, children, we will go
Where the blooming roses grow,
In a joyful company
We the bursting flowers will see;
Up! your festal dress prepare!
Where gay hearts are meeting, there
May hath pleasures most inviting,
Heart, and sight, and ear delighting:
Listen to the bird's sweet song,
Hark! how soft it floats along!
Courtly dames our pleasures share,
Never saw I May so fair;
Therefore, dancing will we go:
Youths rejoice, the flowrets blow;
Sing ye! join the chorus gay!
Hail this merry, merry May!

Our manly youths,—where are they now?
Bid them up, and with us go
To the sporters on the plain;
Bid adieu to care and pain,
Now, thou pale and wounded lover!
Thou thy peace shalt soon recover:

Many a laughing lip and eye
Speaks the light heart's gaiety.
Lovely flowers around we find,
In the smiling verdure twined,
Richly steep'd in May dews glowing:
Youths! rejoice, the flowers are blowing
Sing ye! join the chorus gay!
Hail this merry, merry May!

Oh, if to my love restored,
Her, o'er all her sex adored,
What supreme delight were mine!
How would Care her sway resign!
Merrily in the bloom of May,
I would weave a garland gay;
Better than the best is she,
Purer than all purity!
For her spotless self alone,
I will sing this changeless one;
Thankful or unthankful, she
Shall my song, my idol, be.
Youths, then, join the chorus gay!
Hail this merry, merry May!

CHAPTER V.

ON SOME OF THE MORE CELEBRATED TROUBADOURS.

In examining the literature of Provence, we have not the same advantages which we enjoy in enquiring into that of other countries. We are not directed, by public opinion, to a few celebrated authors; to a few compositions, which have been ranked amongst the masterpieces of the human intellect. All the Troubadours, on the contrary, have nearly an equal title to fame. We find them, it is true, divided into two very distinct classes; the Troubadours, and the *Jongleurs* or minstrels. But it is in their rank rather than in their talents; in their employment rather than their renown, that the distinction consists. The Troubadours, as their name imports, were men *qui trouvaient*, who composed, new poems; just as the *Poets*, a name which has passed, from the Greek, into all other languages, were those who *made* or *created:* for at the origin of poetry, invention was always considered as the essence of the art. The Troubadours often themselves sang their *treuves* in courts and festivals, but more frequently these were sung by their Jongleurs. It was the duty of the latter, who were altogether of an inferior rank, to entertain the companies into which they were admitted, by the recitation of tales and verses which they had learned, and which they accompanied on different instruments, and even by juggling tricks and buffoonery. Even though thus degraded, they learned to compose verses, in imitation of those which they recited from memory. The Provençal poetry was founded on the sentiment of harmony, and required no previous knowledge in the poet; and those, therefore, who lived by reciting verses, soon learned to compose them. Thus the corruption and degradation of the Jongleurs, who, as soon as they began to rhyme themselves, assumed the name of Troubadours, contributed, more than any thing else, to the destruction of the fraternity. Giraud de Calanson, a Troubadour, or rather a

Jongleur, of Gascony, has given, in a curious *sirvente*, the following advice to a Jongleur.

He tells him that he must know how to compose and rhyme well, and how to propose a *jeuparti*. He must play on the tambourine and the cymbals, and make the symphony resound. To throw and catch little balls, on the point of a knife; to imitate the song of birds; to play tricks, with the baskets; to exhibit attacks of castles, and leaps (no doubt, of monkeys) through four hoops; to play on the citole and the mandore; to handle the claricord and the guitar; to string the wheel with seventeen chords, to play on the harp, and to adapt a gigue so as to enliven the psaltry, are indispensable accomplishments.* The Jongleur must prepare nine instruments with ten chords, which, if he learns to play well, will be sufficient for his purpose; and he must know how to sound the lyre and the bells.

After an enumeration of the romances and the tales, which the Jongleur ought to be able to recite, the poet tells him, that he must know how Love runs and flies, how he goes naked

* [It is difficult to determine what was the nature of all these various musical instruments. The gigue seems to be unknown. Burney, *Hist. of Music*, vol. ii. p. 270. The mandore was a species of lute, about two feet long, and strung with four cords. The manicord, or claricorde, was a sort of spinet resembling the virginals, and is said, by Scaliger, to be more ancient than the harpsicord or the spinet. The psaltry is described by Burney, vol i. p. 519, and in the *Essai sur la Musique*, vol i. p. 302. Burney likewise gives a fragment, in which all the accomplishments of a Jongleur are catalogued.

" All the minstrel art I know;
I the viol well can play;
I the pipe and syrinx blow,
Harp and gigue my hand obey;
Psaltry, symphony, and rote,
Help to charm the listening throng,
And Armonia lends its note
While I warble forth my song.

I have tales and fables plenty,
Satires, past'rals, full of sport,
Songs to Vielle I've more than twenty,
Ditties, too, of every sort.
I from lovers tokens bear,
I can flowery chaplets weave,
Amorous belts can well prepare,
And with courteous speech deceive."—*Tr.*]

and unclothed, and how he repulses Justice with his keen darts, and his two arrows, one of which is made of dazzling gold, and the other of steel, which inflicts wounds so deep that they cannot be healed. He must learn the ordinances of Love, its privileges and remedies; and be able to explain its different degrees; how rapid its pace; on what it lives; how it departs; the deceptions it then exercises; and how it destroys its worshippers. He then tells him, that, when he knows all this, he must seek the young king of Aragon, for that no one can better appreciate such accomplishments; and that if he there plays his part well, and distinguishes himself amongst the foremost, he will have no occasion to complain of that monarch's want of liberality. And lastly, that if he does not rise above mediocrity, he will deserve an ungracious reception from the best prince in the world.

But whilst Giraud de Calanson, in this *sirvente*, prepares the Troubadours for the lowest arts and the most degrading occupations, other poets felt and expressed a lively indignation at the decay of this sublime art, and at the corruption of taste and the confusion of ranks, which gave the name of Jongleurs to men who played legerdemain tricks and exhibited apes. Giraud Riquier and Pierre Vidal have both expressed the same sentiments.

Amongst the Troubadours, some were raised above their fellows, less by their talents than by the distinguished rank which they held in society. In the number of those whose manuscripts have been collected by M. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, and analyzed by Millot, we find several sovereigns, the first of whom is William IX. Count of Poitou and Duke of Acquitaine. Nine of his compositions in verse have been preserved, remarkable for the harmony of their versification and for the elegant mixture of their measures and rhymes. His life was divided between devotion to the ladies and to religion, for he was engaged in the first crusade. In the midst of the Holy War he still preserved his gay and somewhat licentious humour: and in his verses, we find traces of his love, his pleasures, and his devotion. We have already mentioned two *sirventes* of Richard I. of England. There is likewise a love-song of Alfonso II. of Aragon, one of the most illustrious warriors of the eleventh century, an age fertile in great men. We also possess many other poems,

both political and amatory, by the Dauphin L'Auvergne, the Bishop of Clermont, and the last Count and Countess of Provence, Raymond Berenger V. and Beatrix; by Peter III. of Aragon, the celebrated instigator of the Sicilian Vespers, and by his youngest son, Frederic II. the hero and the avenger of the Sicilians. The works of these sovereigns merit our observation as historical monuments, which throw a light on the interests by which they were governed, on their personal character, and on the manners of the times in which they lived. In a literary point of view, however, there were but few Troubadours, whose names were still renowned, at the period when Dante and Petrarch flourished; and to these we shall now proceed.

In the first rank, we shall place Arnaud de Marveil; although Petrarch, in giving the preference to Arnaud Daniel, calls the former *il men famoso Arnaldo.* He was born at Marveil, in Perigord, in a humble rank of life, from which his talents fortunately raised him; and he was attached to the court of Roger II. Viscount of Beziers, called Taillefer. The love which he conceived for the wife of his master, the Countess Adelaide, daughter of Raymond V. Count of Toulouse, was the means of developing his talents, and directing the destiny of his life. His versification is easy, and full of nature and tenderness. Among the Provençals, he well deserves to be called the Great Master of Love, a name which Petrarch has reserved for Arnaud Daniel.

All I behold recalls the memory
Of her I love. The freshness of the hour
Th' enamell'd fields, the many coloured flower,
Speaking of her, move to me melody.
Had not the poets, with their courtly phrase.
Saluted many a fair of meaner worth,
I could not now have render'd thee the praise
So justly due, of "Fairest of the Earth."
To name thee thus had been to speak thy name,
And waken, o'er thy cheek, the blush of modest shame.*

Arnaud de Marveil, when exiled from Beziers, by the jealousy, not of the husband of the lady he loved, but of a

* [The Translator has been unable to discover the originals of this, and of the following extracts. A translation of the first is given by M. Raynouard, vol. ii. p. xxiv. *Tr.*]

more illustrious and happy rival, Alfonzo IX. King of Castile, thus delicately sang the torments of absence.

"They tell me that the heart is only touched by the intervention of the eyes; but I, though I see not the object of my passion, am but the more deeply sensible of the loss I have sustained. They may bear her from my presence, but they can never untie the knot which attaches my heart to her. That heart, so tender and so constant, God alone divides with her; and the portion which God possesses, *he holds as a part of her domain, if God could be a vassal, and hold a fief.* Happy scenes, in which she dwells! when shall I be permitted to revisit you? When shall I behold some one who comes thence? A herdsman from thence would be a noble in my eyes. Oh! that I inhabited a desert, were she but with me! That desert should then be my paradise.

Arnaud de Marveil has left many poems, some of which are very long.* One of his pieces contains four hundred

* [A number of his poems are given by *Raynouard*, iii. 199, and in the *Parnasse Occitanien*, i. 15. As the specimens of this poet, given by M. de Sismondi, are so very short, the insertion of the following lines, for which the translator is indebted to the kindness of a friend, will perhaps be excused. The original may be found in *Raynouard*, iii. 208.—*Tr.*]

Oh! how sweet the breeze of April,
Breathing soft as May draws near!
While, through nights of tranquil beauty,
Songs of gladness meet the ear:
Every bird his well-known language
Uttering in the morning's pride,
Revelling in joy and gladness
By his happy partner's side.

When, around me, all is smiling,
When to life the young birds spring,
Thoughts of love, I cannot hinder,
Come, my heart inspiriting—
Nature, habit, both incline me
In such joy to bear my part:
With such sounds of bliss around me
Who could wear a sadden'd heart?

Fairer than the far-famed Helen,
Lovelier than the flow'rets gay,
Snow-white teeth, and lips truth-telling,
Heart as open as the day;
Golden hair, and fresh bright roses,—
Heaven, who formed a thing so fair,
Knows that never yet another
Lived, who can with her compare.

verses, and many of them, two hundred. His language is clear and easy, and his text appears to have suffered but little alteration. He is, therefore, a Troubadour whose works might be separately printed, to try the taste of the public for Provençal poetry, and at the same time to gratify the wishes of the learned throughout all Europe, who regret the loss of these monuments of our earliest literature and civilization.* The Countess of Beziers died in 1201, and there is reason to believe that Arnaud de Marveil died before her.

Next to a Troubadour, who sang nothing but love, we shall place a valiant knight, who acquired as much glory by his sword as by his lyre. Rambaud de Vaqueiras † was the son of a poor knight, of the principality of Orange. He attached himself, in his youth, to the person of William de Baux, first Prince of Orange, within whose allegiance he was born. Whilst he acted the part of a valiant soldier beneath that prince's banners, he at the same time celebrated his victories, and attacked his enemies in his verses, commemorating even the trophies which he bore away in the tourneys. From the service of the Prince of Orange, Vaqueiras passed into that of Boniface III. Marquis of Montferrat, who led, with Baldwin and Dandolo, the fourth crusade, and who, after

* The following commencement of an epistle from Arnaud de Marveil to his mistress, possesses beauty, grace, and sensibility:

Cel que vos es al cor pus près
Don' am preguet qu' eus saludes,
Sel qu'eus amet pus anc nos vi
Ab franc cor et humil e fi;
S que autra non pot amar
Ni auza vos merce clamar,
E vien ses joy ab grant dolor;
Sel que non pot son cor partir
De vos sin s' abia a morir;
Sel que tos temps vos amara
May c' autra, tan can vievra,
Sel que ses vos non pot aver
En est segle joy ni plazer,
Sel que no sap cosselh de se
Si ab vos non troba merce,
Vos saluda; e vostra lauzor,
Vostra beutat, vostra valor,
Vostre solatz, vostre parlar,
Vostr' aculhir e vostr' onrar,
Vostre pretz, vostr' essenhamen,
Vostre saber, e vostre sen,
Vostre gen cors, vostre dos riz,
Vostra terra, vostre pays.
Mas l'erguelh que avetz a lui
Volgra ben ayzas ad altrui.
Quel erguelh Dona e l'espavens,
Quel fezes lestal marrimens
C'anc pueys non ai joy ni deport,
Ni sap en cal guizas conort;
Mas lo melhos conort que a
Es car sap que por vos morra,
E plaits li mais morrir per vos
Que per autra vivre joyoz.

† [Five poems, by this author, are given in the *Parnasse Occitanien*, i. 75, and three in *Raynouard*, iii. 256 One of the poems is to be found in both. *Tr.*]

having disputed the throne of Constantinople, was raised to that of Thessalonica. By Boniface, Vaqueiras was dubbed a knight. That excellent judge of bravery and military talent bestowed many honours on the poetical warrior, who had rendered him such important services in his various wars. He beheld, with pleasure, his attachment to his sister Beatrix, and he himself took the trouble of reconciling them, after a serious quarrel. Vaqueiras composed many *chanzos*, in honour of Beatrix, whom he called his *Bel Cavalier*, from having once seen her gracefully managing a sword. In these verses, we find the impression of the manly haughtiness and loyalty of his character. But all love-poems lose their identity, when translated into prose, and, perhaps, are all equally tiresome. Vaqueiras was more remarkable for his warlike imagination. The preaching of the third crusade inflamed him with new enthusiasm. He sang the Holy War in a *sirvente*, addressed to his princely protector and friend, when, on the death of the Count of Champagne in 1204, the former was chosen leader of the Christian forces.

"It is clear that God delights to recompense the brave. He has raised the reputation of the Marquis of Montferrat so high above the most valiant, that all the Crusaders of France and Champagne have demanded him from heaven, as the man best qualified to recover the holy sepulchre. This brave marquis, God has given him courageous vassals, a large territory, and great riches, to ensure him success.

"He who made the air, the heavens, the earth, the sea, the heat, the cold, the rain and the thunder, wills, that we should pass the seas in his train, as the Magi, Gui, Gaspard, and Melchior, sought Jerusalem. May St. Nicholas guide our fleet! May the Champagners raise their banner! May the Marquis cry, Montferrat! May the Count Baldwin cry, Flanders! May every one strike so stoutly, that swords and lances may shiver, and we shall soon put the Turks to flight. May the brave King of Spain extend his conquests over the Moors, while the marquis carries on the campaign, and besieges the Saracen.

Envoy. "Fair knight, for whom I compose these verses and songs, I know not whether, for you, I shall assume or quit the cross; so much you please me, when I see you, and so much I suffer in your absence."

Vaqueiras followed the Marquis Boniface into Greece, and combated, like a brave cavalier, by his side, before the palace of Blachernæ, and afterwards at the assault of Constantinople. After the division of the Greek empire, he followed Boniface into his kingdom of Thessalonica, and received from him feifs, seignories, and other magnificent rewards. Still, ambition could not make him forget his love; and, in the midst of his conquests in Greece, he thus bewailed his absence.

"What avail my conquests, my riches, and my glory! How much richer was I, when I was loved, myself a faithful lover! I know no other pleasures than those of love. Useless are all my goods and my lands, and the more my power and riches increase, the more deeply does my heart feel its distress, parted from my Fair Knight."*

But, by far the most curious poem by Vaqueiras, is that in which, retracing the history of his own life and of that of Boniface, the dangers they had confronted in common, the services they had rendered, and the conquests they had made, he demands, with noble confidence, the recompense due to his fidelity and his valour. I regret that this poem is too long for insertion, since no production of the kind bears a deeper impress of the chivalric character of that faithful vassalage, which did not chill friendship, and of that subordination, which did not hinder the souls of both lord and vassal from attaining the same elevation. Vaqueiras praises his master, as he recalls his victories and his dangers. He brings to mind their numerous adventures in Piedmont, in the States of Genoa, in Sicily, and in Greece, where he was ever by his side; and he frankly claims a portion of the glory and the gratitude which were due to him. The following anecdote, which he relates amongst others, seems to give a good picture of the manners of the times:—

"Do you remember," says he, "the Jongleur Aimonet, who brought you news of Jacobina, when she was on the point of being carried into Sardinia, and married to a man she disliked? Do you also remember how, on bidding you farewell, she threw herself into your arms, and besought you, in such moving terms, to protect her against the injustice of

* [The Translator has been unable to discover the original of these two fragments. He has, therefore, given a prose translation only of the French prose version.]

her uncle? You immediately ordered five of your bravest esquires to mount. We rode all night, after supper. With my own hand, I bore her from the domain, amidst an universal outcry. They pursued us, horse and foot; we fled, at full speed; and we already thought ourselves out of danger, when we were attacked by the knights of Pisa. With so many cavaliers pressing close upon us, so many shields glittering around us, and so many banners waving in the wind, you need not ask us whether we were afraid. We concealed ourselves between Albenga and Final, and, from the place of our retreat, we heard on all sides the sound of horn and clarion, and the signal-cries of pursuit. Two days, we remained without meat or drink, and when, on the third day, we recommenced our journey, we encountered twelve banditti, and we knew not how to conduct ourselves; for to attack them on horseback was impossible. I dismounted, and advanced against them on foot. I was wounded by a lance; but I disabled three or four of my opponents, and put the rest to flight. My companions, then, came to my assistance; we drove the robbers from the defile, and you passed in safety. You, no doubt, recollect how merrily we dined together, although we had only a single loaf to eat and nothing to drink. In the evening, we arrived at Nice, and were received, by our friend Puiclair, with transports of joy. The next day, you gave Jacobina in marriage to Anselmo, and recovered for him his county of Vintimiglia, in spite of his uncle, who endeavoured to despoil him of it."

The Marquis Boniface III., of Montferrat, was slain in 1207, at the siege of Satalia. We are not informed whether Vaqueiras survived him.

Pierre Vidal of Toulouse, a Troubadour who followed King Richard to the third crusade, was no less celebrated for his extravagant actions than for his poetical talents. Love and vanity, amongst the poets, seem by turns to assume such an empire over the feelings, as almost to shake the reason. None, however, have been known to display more perfect madness than Pierre Vidal. Persuaded that he was beloved by every lady, and that he was the bravest of all knights, he was the Quixote of poetry. His ridiculous amours, and his extravagant rhodomontades, heightened by the treacherous pleasantries of pretended friends, led him

into the strangest errors. During the crusade, he was persuaded, at Cyprus, to marry a Greek lady, who asserted that she was allied to one of the families which had filled the throne of Constantinople; and this circumstance furnished him with sufficient grounds for believing that he was himself entitled to the purple. He assumed the title of Emperor, and bestowed that of Empress upon his wife. He had a throne carried before him, and he destined the produce of his savings and his songs, to assist him in the conquest of his empire. Notwithstanding this affair, he still remained much attached to the wife of Barral des Baux, Viscount of Marseilles, whom he had selected as the lady of his thoughts, and to whom, from Cyprus, he addressed some verses remarkable for their harmony. On his return into Provence, a new amour led him into a still wilder piece of extravagance. He fell in love with a lady of Carcassone, called Louve de Penautier, and, in honour of her, he assumed the surname of *Loup*. To give himself a better title to the appellation, he clothed himself in a wolf's skin, and persuaded the shepherds to chase him, with dogs, over the mountains. He had the perseverance to suffer this strange pursuit to the last extremity, and was carried half-dead to his mistress, who was not much moved by so singular a piece of devotion. Yet, with a head apparently so badly organized, Pierre Vidal possessed an exquisite sensibility, and great harmony of style; and, what will appear still more strange, a sound and healthy judgment on all matters not relating to his own vanity, or to his own attachments. The collection of his works contains more than sixty pieces, and amongst them, three long poems of the kind to which the Provençals gave the simple appellation of *verses*. The most remarkable of the three is that, in which he gives advice to a Troubadour, as to the mode of exercising his noble profession.* Poetry, he considers to be the cultivation of high sentiment, the storehouse of universal philosophy, and the Troubadours to be the instructors of nations. He recalls the glorious days of his youth, when Heaven permitted all Europe to be governed by heroes: when Germany possessed the Emperor Frederic I.; England, Henry II. and his three sons; Toulouse, Count Raymond; and Catalonia, Count

* The whole poem is translated by *Millot*, vol. ii. p 283.

Berenger and his son Alfonso. He shows how poetry was the common bond of union amongst these heroes, and he declares it to be his belief, that it is the duty of the Jongleurs to awaken, in the next generation, the high sentiments which had been the glory of their fathers. He inculcates, at the same time, maxims of modesty, decency, and morality, honourable alike to his character and to his judgment: thus displaying a nobility of language, and a depth of thought, strangely at variance with the extravagance of his conduct.

Another of his *verses*, or long poems, is a new allegory, in which the principal personages whom he introduces are Love, Mercy, Modesty, and Loyalty; some of the allegorical beings, which the East had given to the Provençals, and such as afterwards figured in the Triumphs of Petrarch. The poet relates, that once, when he was in the country, he saw a young cavalier, fair as the morning, advancing towards him, with whose mien he was unacquainted. His eyes were soft and tender; his nose was beautifully formed; his teeth, shining like the purest silver; his mouth, blooming and smiling, and his figure, slight and graceful. His robe was embroidered with flowers, and his head was adorned with a crown of roses. His palfrey, which was white as snow, was marked with spots of black and purple. His saddle-bow was of jasper, his housings were of sapphire, and the stirrups, of chalcedony. Addressing himself to the poet, he said, "Know, Pierre Vidal, that I am Love; this lady is called Mercy, that damsel is Modesty; and my esquire, there, is Loyalty." This poem proves, that the Love of the Provençals was not Cupid, the son of Venus, and that these romantic allegories are not borrowed from the Pagan mythology. The *Cavalier Love* of Pierre Vidal, is clothed in the costume of the chivalric age, which gave him birth. His palfrey is described with the same minuteness as his own person. His suite is composed of the chivalric virtues, and not of joys and smiles. The whole idea bears the character of another age. Love, indeed, amongst the poets of the East, was mounted in a manner, very different from that, in which our Troubadour represents him. Most frequently, he was seated, by them, on the wings of a parroquet; whence the Provençals, in imitation of the Arabians, have often introdueed that richly-plumaged bird into their songs, as the messenger of Love.

It is said, that Pierre Vidal, in his old age, wrote a treatise *On the art of holding one's tongue.* He made a second voyage to the Levant, where, we are assured, he again indulged the ridiculous idea of becoming Emperor of the East, then under the dominion of the Latins. He died in 1229, two years after his return.

We have seen that Petrarch gives the first rank, amongst the Troubadours, to Arnaud Daniel, whom he places above Arnaud de Marveil. Dante pays him no less a compliment, in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentiâ.* He looks upon him as the Troubadour who possessed the greatest mastery over his language, and surpassed all the other writers in the Romance languages, both in the tenderness of his verses, and in his prose compositions. He introduces him in the twenty-sixth canto of the Purgatorio, and puts some lines, in the Provençal language, into his mouth, which have a singular effect in a poem entirely Italian. But the seventeen pieces, by this poet, which survive, do not bear out all these eulogies. The invention of the stanza in six lines, which is attributed to him, does not confer so much honour upon him, in our eyes, as it appears formerly to have done.* There is reason to believe, that his better productions are lost, and we ought not, therefore, to judge him too severely, by those which remain.

Amanieu des Escas, who flourished at the end of the thirteenth century, under the dominion of the Kings of

* The stanzas of six lines, which were afterwards imitated by Petrarch, and by the principal Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese poets, are songs in six stanzas, of six lines each. The lines of the first stanza are terminated by six substantives, of two syllables each, which ought likewise to form the termination of the lines of all the other stanzas, with this variation, that in each stanza the words ought to change their place. The same word ought to be found successively at the end of the first, the sixth, the fifth, the fourth, the third, and the second lines of each stanza; so that by the end of the piece it will have occupied all the places in the stanza. No harmony, perceptible to the ear, results from this order of words, so difficult to observe; and the sense is almost always sacrificed to the constrained versification. The constant return of six words, necessarily forming the groundwork of the ideas, and compelling the poet, as they recur, to avail himself of all their significations, has, however, something pensive and melancholy about it; and the poets have occasionally clothed, in this stanza, some very touching reflections.

Aragon, has left us, amongst various amatory effusions, two *verses*, or long poems, on the education of young ladies and gentlemen; which, without being remarkable for poetical invention, are interesting from the *naïveté* of the descriptions, which they contain, of the manners of the times. The lady, who, in the course of the poem, is twice or thrice addressed by the title of Marchioness, applies herself to Des Escas, who was himself a powerful lord, for his counsel, as to the proper mode of conducting herself in the world. We are not a little surprised, when we find that the first advice he gives her, is more fitted for a domestic than for a lady of rank. He tells her that, in the first place, after attending to her toilet (and, here, the poet enters into the most minute details,) she must prepare to assist her lady in rising, and that she must bring her all she requires for dressing her head, adjusting her robe, and washing her hands.* It was, at this time, regarded as an essential part of female education, that a young lady should learn to obey, before she presumed to command; and she, therefore, willingly attached herself to some noble dame, to learn from her, whilst she performed these menial offices, politeness and the art *de beau parler*. Des Escas then instructs the damsel on her duties, when she is addressed by a suitor. He tells her, that it is quite proper that she should make choice of some obedient admirer; provided that, instead of selecting him merely for his handsome person or his riches, she accept the services of a courteous lover, of honourable birth. He permits her both to give and to receive presents; but he admonishes her not to trespass beyond certain boundaries: "For, if he loves you," continues he, "he ought to ask you for nothing, *whilst you continue unmarried*, which can be prejudicial or dishonourable to you." We perceive, from this, that the Provençals were of opinion, as are the Italians and the Spanish at the present day, that gallantry after marriage was a venial offence, whilst, in an unmarried

* E cosselh vos premier
Que siatz matiniera,
Cascu jorn que premieira
Vos levetz que vostra dona,
En asi que si eus sona
Vos truep gent adobada,
E vestida e caussada;
Et enantz que eus cordetz
Lau qu'el bras vos lavetz
E las mas, et la cara.
Après amiga cara
Coidatz estrechamen
Vostre bratz ben e gen,
I es las onglas dels detz
Tan longuas non portetz
Que i paresca del nier.

woman. It was accounted highly disreputable; and the consequences of this false morality are easily foreseen.*

The advice to the young gentlemen is much of the same nature, intermingled with domestic details and maxims of gallantry. Such young men as were not rich enough to support themselves at court, at their own expense, and yet wished to educate themselves to gallantry and arms, usually attached themselves to some lord, whom they served as pages at court, or as esquires in the field. The counsels of Des Escas to the youth, are those of an honourable man, of good sense, but exceedingly verbose, as if he thought that he had never said enough. He takes occasion, from a compliment which the young gentleman had addressed to him, to caution him against the habit of flattering his superiors. He shews him what an injury it is to his own character, and how he only heaps ridicule upon the man to whom he wishes to render himself agreeable. He enlarges very much on the subject of love, that most important affair, the great duty of all young cavaliers, and the science in which the Troubadours may be said to have taken their degrees. The advice which he gives him, with regard to the elegance of his dress, his demeanour during tourneys, his reserve, and his discretion, is comformable to the manners of a chivalrous age, but does not possess sufficient novelty for insertion in this place. The following exhortation, as to his conduct towards his mistress, we are certainly unprepared for. "In case she should give you real grounds for jealousy, and should deny that, of which your own eyes have given you proof, say to her, 'Lady, I am persuaded that what you tell me is true, but I did really believe that I had seen it.'"† This reminds us of the lady of fashion, who, when surprised, by her lover, with another, thus answered his furious reproaches: "I am persuaded you do not love me, for you believe your own eyes, in preference to my word."

* E si eus ama fort bela
De mentre qu'es pieusela
El no us deu requerer
Qu' eus torn a desplaser
Ad onta ni a dampnatje
De tot vostre linhatje.

† E se la us far gelos
E us en dona razo,
E us ditz c' anere no fo
De so que dels huelhs vis,
Diguatz Don: Eu suy fiz
Que vos diseta vertat,
Mas yeu vay simiat.

Pierre Cardinal,* of an illustrious family at Puy in Velay, who died when almost a century old, occupied, at the commencement of the thirteenth century, a distinguished place amongst the Troubadours, less on account of the harmony of his style than of the vigour and asperity of his satirical powers. He is the Juvenal of the Provençals. The obstinacy of his character, his frankness, often degenerating into rudeness, and his bitter raillery, were not calculated to promote his success amongst the ladies. He, therefore, quitted gallantry, at an early age, to become a writer of *sirventes;* for the Troubadours gave this name to their satires also, from the time that they were divided into stanzas like their *chanzos.* These *sirventes* are levelled, by turns, against all ranks of society; the elevated clergy, the military orders, the monks, the barons, and the ladies. Pierre Cardinal sees nothing around him but corruption of manners, cupidity, egotism, and baseness. His observations, although they exhibit but little acuteness, have yet an air of truth about them. Vice excites his anger, which is occasionally eloquent; and, in his rapid invectives, he seldom mingles either idle details or ill-judged reflections. His boldness astonishes us, at a period when the Inquisition might have called him to account, for his offences against the church. "Indulgences and pardons, God and the Devil," says he, speaking of the priesthood, "are all put in requisition. Upon these, they bestow Paradise, by their pardons; others, they condemn to perdition, by their excommunications. They inflict blows which cannot be parried; and no one is so skilful in imposition, that they cannot impose upon him. . . . . There are no crimes, for which the monks cannot give absolution. For money, they grant to renegades and usurers that sepulture which they deny to the poor, because they are unable to pay for it. To live pleasantly, to buy good fish, the whitest bread, and the finest wine this is their object, the whole year round. God willing, I would be of this order, if I could purchase my salvation at this price."

We, likewise, possess a *sirvente,* by the same writer, against the priests; another, against the barons; and a third, on the general depravity of the times. "From the East to the

* [See *Raynouard,* iii. p. 436. *Parnasse Occitanien,* i. p. 306. *Tr.*]

West, I will make a new covenant with all the world. To every loyal man I will give a *bezant*,* if the disloyal will give me a nail. To all the courteous I will give a mark of gold, if the discourteous will give me a penny. To all that speak the truth I will give a heap of gold, if every liar will give me an egg. As to all the laws that are obeyed, I could write them on a piece of parchment, no larger than half the thumb of my glove. A young turtle-dove should nourish all the brave, for I should be ashamed to offer them a scanty entertainment. But if I had to invite the wicked, I would cry, without regard to the place, 'Come and feast, all honest people!'"†

These satires drew down, upon Pierre Cardinal, the hatred of all whom he attacked, and he thus describes his desolate condition.—"There was once a city, I do not remember where, in which such a shower fell, that it drove every one mad whom it touched. All the inhabitants were thus affected, except one; and he escaped, in consequence of having been asleep in a house when the shower happened, and when he awakened, he perceived that it had ceased. When he walked out, one man ran after him, another ran away from him. This man stood stupified, that threw stones at the stars, and another was tearing off his clothes. This man strikes him, that offers him money. Here, a man imagines himself a king, and walks magnificently with his arms a-kimbo; while,

* A coin, current in Constantinople, of about the value of ten shillings.

† D'aus aurien tro al solelh colgan
Faüc a la gen un covinen novel;
A lial hom donarai un bezanh
Si'l deslial mi dona un clavel;
Et un marc d'aur donarai al cortes
Si'l descauzit mi dona un tornes.
Al vertadier darai d'aur un gran mont
Si ay un huovs dels messongiers que son.

Tota la ley qu'ils pus de la gen an
Escrieur 'ieu en un petit de pel,
En la meitat del polgar de mon gan;
El pros homes paisserai d'un tortel,
Car ja pels pros no fara car con res;
Mais si fos uns que los malvats pogues,
Cridar ferai, e no gardassen on,
Venetz manjar, li pro home del mon.

there, another is sitting on the ground. One man uses menaces, another vents abuse; one weeps, and another laughs; one speaks without understanding what he says, and another is entirely occupied with himself. The man, who had retained his senses, is prodigiously astonished; he sees that they are wide awake, and he eyes them from head to foot. But, though he is thus astonished, their surprise is much greater, at seeing him in his sound mind. They believe that he has lost his senses, because he does not act as they do. They all think that it is they who are wise and prudent, and that it is he who is mad. One of them strikes him on the body, another on the neck: and he cannot stir, without being attacked. This man seizes him; the other pushes him, as he strives to escape from the crowd. One man menaces him; another drags him along. Now, they raise him up, and again, they let him fall; and each plays his pranks upon him. He takes refuge in his house, covered with mud, bruised, and half-dead, rejoicing in his escape from them.

"This fable is very applicable to the world at large. This present age represents the city, which possesses so many madmen. The highest wisdom of man is, to love God and his mother, and to keep his commandments; but that wisdom is now lost. The shower which fell is the covetousness, the pride, and the malice, with which the whole race of man is perplexed; and if God has preserved any from this misfortune, the others regard them as madmen, and despise them, because they differ from themselves, and because the wisdom of God appears to them folly. The friend of God knows that they are senseless, when they have lost the wisdom of God; and they hold him to be mad, because they have forsaken the wisdom of God." *

* It has been thought proper to give a literal translation of this specimen of Provençal poetry; as it will enable those, who read the original, to comprehend it with greater ease, and to those who, without making that attempt, content themselves with the version, it will give a better idea of the turn and spirit of the original. The text has been translated, word for word, as far as my very imperfect acquaintance with a language, which I have been able to study only in a few manuscript fragments, has enabled me so to do.

Yssy comensa la faula de la pluya.

Una ciutat fo, no say quals
Hon cazee una plueya tals
Que tuy li home de la ciutat
Que toque, foro forcenat.

Tuy

Giraud Riquier, of Narbonne,* was a follower of Alfonzo X., King of Castile, and flourished at the end of the thirteenth century. He is one of the Troubadours, of whose works we have the most numerous remains. He lived at a period, when the poets sought, by novel attempts, to distinguish themselves from the crowd of their predecessors. He has left pastorals, *aubades*, serenades, *retrouanges*, epistles, and discourses in verse.† He has varied, as far as lay in his

Tuy desse n'ero mals, sols us,
Et aquel escapet, ses pus,
Que era dins una mayzo
Que dormia quant aysso fo.
E vet, quant at dormit
Del plueya diquit,
E foras entre la gens
Fero d'essenamens
Arroquet, l'autre foucis,
Utre estupit versus,
E trays peras contre estelas,
L'autre esquisset las gonelas,
Us feric, el autrem peys,
E l'autre cuyet esser Reys,
Et tenc se riquement pels flancx,
E l'autre s'asset per los bancx.
L'us menasec l'autre maldisz,
L'autre plorec et l'autre riz,
L'autre parlec e no saup que;
L'autre fe meteys de se.
Aquel que avia so sen,
Meravilha se molt formen,
Que vee que be destatz son,
E garda ad aval ed amon,
E grans meravelha a de lor.
Mas mot l'hau ilh de lui mayor;
Qu'el vezon estar saviamen
Cuio que aia perdut so sen,
Car so qu'elh fan no lh vezo fayre
Que a cascu de lores veyaire
Que ilh son savi e assenatz.
Mas lui teno por dessenat
Qui'l fer en gansa, qui en col;
Nos pot mudar que nos degol;
L'us l'empenh, e l'autre le bota,
El cuya isshir de la rota,
L'us l'esquinsa, l'autre li tray,
E pren colos, e leva, e chay;
Cascu'l leva a gran gabantz,
El fuy a sa mayzo deffantz,
Fangos e battutz e mieg mort,
E ac gaug can lor fo estort.
Sest fable es en aquest mon
Semblans als homes que i son.
Aquest seigles es la ciutat
Que es tot ples de forsennatz;
Que el mager sen qu'om pot aver
So es amar Dieu et sa mer,
E gardar sos comendamens,
Mas arra es perdutz aquels sens.
La pluya say es casuda,
Una cobeytat qu'es venguda,
Us erguelh et una maleza
Que tota la gent a perpreza.
E si Dieu n'a alcu gardatz,
L'autru ils teno por dessenat,
E menon lo de tomp en vilh,
Car no es del seu que son ilh.
Qu'el sen de Dieu lor par folia,
E l'amiers de Dieu on que sia
Conoys que dessenatz sou tug
Car le sen de Dieu an perdut;
E els an lui per dessenat
Car le sen de Dieu an layssat.

* [Six of his pieces are given in the *Parnasse Occit.* i. 329, and the same number, in *Raynouard*, iii. 461. Three of the latter are the same as those given in the *Parnasse.*—*Tr.*]

† These different names do not indicate much real variety in the poems. The pastorals were eclogues, which more frequently contained conversations between the writer and the shepherds, than dialogues between the shepherds themselves. The *aubades* and the serenades were love-songs, for the morning and the evening. The *retrouanges* and the

power, the form of his verses, but he has not succeeded in infusing into them any substantial novelty. His discourses in verse, and his didactic poems, contain little, beyond common place ideas and trite moral maxims. Yet we recognize, in them, the spirit of an honourable man, not deficient in a proper pride. The longest of his poems, by far, is a petition addressed to Alfonso of Castile, to raise the profession of the Jongleurs from the degradation into which it had fallen, on account of the Charlatans, who amused the people by their buffooneries, exhibiting dancing apes and goats, and singing the grossest songs in public, under the same name as the poets of the courts. He demands that, by his royal authority, Alfonso shall separate all the men who are thus confounded together, into four distinct classes—the professors of the art of poetry, the simple Troubadours, the Jongleurs, and the buffoons. This poem, which bears date in the year 1275, is one of the last sighs, breathed by the expiring poetry of Provence.* The Troubadour had already witnessed the fall of his art: he had survived his glory, the literature which he loved, and the language in which he had distinguished himself.

redondes were ballads of a more complicated construction, in which the burthen was introduced in such a manner as to render the composition more laborious. All these poems, even the pastorals, were of a lyrical cast.

* This long poem is, properly, an epistle to the King of Castile. Giraud Riquier wrote many of the same kind, and seems to have been very successful in catching the epistolary style. Still, he is difficult to be understood, and this difficulty appears to me, generally, to arise from the corruption of the text of the Troubadours. After having shewn how each state in society divides itself into several classes, distinguished by name, he adds:

Per quem ai albirat
Que fora covinen
De noms entre joglars,
Que non e ben estars.
Car entr' els li melhor
Non an de noms honor
Atresi com de fach
Qu'ieu ne teng a maltrags
Cus homs senes saber
Ab sotil captener,
Si de qualqu' estrumen
Sab un pauc a prezen
S'en ira el tocan
Per carrieiras sercan
E queren c'omz li do
O autre sez razo.
Cantara per las plassas
Vilmen et en gens bassas;
Metra queren sa ponha
E totas ses vergonha
Privadas et estranhas,
Pueys iras si en tavernas
Ab sol qu' en puesc aver
E non auzan parer
En deguna cort bona.

His situation reminds us of that of Ossian, in the last of his poems, where he renounces his harp, whose harmony the new race of men knew not how to appreciate. But, how different are the two poems! The Jongleur of Narbonne thinks only of his own vanity; while the bard of Morven is insensible to every thing but the loss of Oscar and Malvina, and of the country and the glory which he has survived.

We shall not attempt to make the reader acquainted with any of the other poets, who form the multitude of Troubadours, and who all hold nearly the same rank, and possess equal pretensions to that celebrity, which none of them have been able to obtain. An extreme monotony reigns throughout all their works; and, when the features are similar in all, it is difficult to paint a portrait so as to present any individuality of character. We have seen how the Provençal poetry, taking its rise in the eleventh century, and spreading throughout the south of France, and over a portion of Spain and Italy, was the delight of every court, animated all the festivals, and was familiar to all classes of the people; and we have seen how, at the middle of the thirteenth century, it had made no perceptible progress. All that we find in the earliest songs of William IX., Count of Poitiers, meets us again in the latest productions of Giraud Riquier, or of Jean Estève. The language was almost always the same, and seems only to vary, according to the greater or less negligence of the copyists; or, perhaps, in consequence of the pretensions of the later poets, who, to gain the reputation of employing singular and difficult rhymes, corrupted their language, by augmenting its obscurities and irregularities. We find the same gallantry, expressed in the same hyperbolical terms; the same tenderness, proceeding from the ingenious conceits of the brain, rather than from the real feeling of the heart; the same love-songs, presenting the portrait of a beauty like all other beauties, and destitute of expression; with the same exaggerations of her merit, her birth, and her character; the same tears, the same submission, the same prayers, each undistinguishable from the other, and all of them equally tedious. We have satirical *sirventes*, in which grossness and abuse supply the place of novelty and of wit; and *tensons*, in which all the common-places of gallantry are debated, without exciting our interest, and without ability.

We find *sextines*, *retrouanges*, and *redondes*, in which sense gives place to rhyme, without a single fine poetical conception, or a single attempt at the epic or tragic style. No trace of true feeling is discoverable ; no gaiety proceeding from the frankness of the heart, or founded upon anything better than trespasses against decency. This result is really surprising, after examining the productions of nearly two hundred poets, whose works have been collected by M. de Sainte-Palaye, and extracted by Millot. The enthusiastic love of poetry, which seized the whole nation, leads us to expect far different things. The harmonious ear, which had presided at the invention of so many varied forms of verse ; the sensibility, the fancy, which displayed themselves in the earlier songs of the Troubadours ; the richness of the images, which they had borrowed from the East, or which were created by the effort of their own imaginations, all gave a hope that some true poet would soon rise up amongst them. The art of versification, amongst the Italians, the Spanish, and other nations, had not nearly so brilliant an origin. As we advance, however, we are gradually undeceived, and are disgusted with all that at first promised us pleasure. We feel inclined to concur in opinion with the public, who, even without a knowledge of the Troubadours, have rejected their claims to celebrity, leaving their works buried in manuscripts, rarely to be met with, and in danger of perishing for ever ; and who have condemned their language, the earliest of the European dialects, notwithstanding its sonorous harmony, its flexibility, equal to the Italian, and its majesty of sound which rivals the Spanish, because no writer of true genius has arisen, to redeem it from the charge of sterility. This poverty in the literature of Provence, and this sudden decay, succeeding so splendid an era, demand some explanation. After the thirteenth century, the Troubadours were heard no more, and all the efforts of the Counts of Provence, who had then assumed the title of king of Naples, of the magistrates of Toulouse, and of the kings of Aragon, to awaken their genius, by the Courts of Love and the Floral Games, were vain.

The Troubadours themselves have attributed their decay to the degradation into which the Jongleurs, with whom they were generally confounded, had fallen. To make an occu-

pation of amusing the rich and the powerful, and to sell laughter and entertainment, must always deteriorate the character. When gaiety and wit are repaid with a salary, the receiver is necessarily placed on a level with the lowest buffoons; and, in addressing the populace, such men, perhaps, have more success, in exciting admiration and in gaining rewards, than others of the most distinguished talents, whose productions are calculated to gratify real taste. The Jongleurs *(Joculatores)* used to take their stations in the cross-roads, clothed in grotesque habits, and attract a crowd around them, by exhibiting dancing apes, legerdemain tricks, and the most ridiculous antics, and grimaces. In this manner they prepared their audience for the verses which they recited; and they cared not what extravagancies they committed, provided they were well rewarded. The most distinguished Troubadours, when they presented themselves at the court of a prince, or the castle of a baron, were often introduced under this name of Jongleurs. Even when they experienced the reception due to their talents, and when the noblest ladies admitted them to familiar converse, or bestowed their affections upon them, they were, yet, made to feel that they were considered as of a subordinate rank, and that their dissolute manners, their irritability, and their insatiable avarice, would not be borne with patience. The jealousy, too, of the offended husbands, frequently compelled them to submit to outrages which degraded them. In a situation so unfavourable to that loftiness of spirit, which is the accompaniment of genius, it was not strange that the talents, even of the noblest characters, should not be developed.

All the Troubadours did not, however, make a trade of their art. A sufficient number of sovereigns and of powerful barons and knights were devoted to poetry, to preserve the nobility of its origin, even during the whole period of Provençal literature. Frederick, King of Sicily, who died in 1326, is the last of the Troubadours, whose works have been collected by M. de Sainte-Palaye, as the Count of Poitou was the first.

But the art of the Troubadour contained within itself a more immediate principle of decay, in the profound ignorance of its professors, and in the impossibility of their giving to their poetry a higher character than they themselves pos-

sessed. A few of them, only, were acquainted with the Latin language; and we may judge of their erudition, by the pretensions which they display in citing, not any poetical passages, but semi-barbarous phrases borrowed from the schoolmen. None of them were acquainted with the authors, whom we denominate classical. In the *Treasure* of Pierre de Corbian,* in which he makes a parade of his acquirements, and seems to think that he is reckoning up the whole sum of human learning, he mentions only one of the Latin poets. This is Ovid, whom he calls a liar; nor can we collect that he had ever read him. In the extracts from two hundred Troubadours, I have scarcely found three or four passages, which contain any allusions to the mythology, or to the history of antiquity. They only, indeed, indicate such vague and uncertain information as an ignorant monk might display, in giving a summary of his acquirements. The Troubadours had no other models than the songs of the Arabians, which their earliest masters had studied, and which had perverted their taste. They had no idea of the elegance of the ancients, and, still less, of their invention; nor were they aware of the necessity of instilling into their poetry new ideas, and of connecting them with action. There is not, in all the poems which have been preserved, the least attempt at the epic; although the great revolutions, in the midst of which they lived, and the events of general interest which they witnessed, and in which they were frequently the actors, ought, naturally, to have given them the habit of relating facts in an animated manner, and of recording historical events in the language and with the spirit of a poet, who designs that his compositions shall be repeated from mouth to mouth. We are told, it is true, of a History of the Conquest of Jerusalem, by the Chevalier Béchada, a Limousin; but, as it is lost, it is impossible for us to determine whether it was not a mere chronicle in rhyme, of which many were written in the north of France. True merit and real talents, employed upon so national a subject, in which such vivid interest was felt by every cavalier, must surely have escaped the fate of Béchada's poem. The Troubadours had no idea of the theatre or of dramatic representations; although the two Nostradamus's, with their usual ignorance and inaccuracy, have given the

* *Millot*, vol. iii. p. 227.

names of tragedies and comedies to compositions, which were no more dramatic than the Divina Commedia of Dante. Thus, deprived of all the riches of antiquity, the Troubadours had few resources within themselves. The Germans, who have named all modern poetry *romantic*, have supposed all the literature of the Romance nations to have originated from Christianity, or, at least, to have been closely connected with it. The poetry of the Provençals, however, bears no traces of this source. It contains very few religious pieces ; none, which display enthusiasm ; nor any, where Christianity forms part of the sentiment or of the action. When, by chance, religion is introduced, if it be not, merely, some hymn to the Virgin, a poor imitation from the Latin church-service, it is only in some profane way. Thus, Bernard de Ventadour, when he compares his lady's kiss to the sweet delights of Paradise, adds, that her favours are a proof of what the Psalmist has said, "That a day, in her courts, is better than a hundred elsewhere." So Arnaud de Marveil calls his lady "the perfect image of the Divinity, before whom all ranks are equal ;" and says that "if God should grant him the enjoyment of his love, he should think that paradise was deprived of all its joy and gladness." Many revoked, in the face of the Church, the oaths by which they had bound themselves to their married mistresses, and were absolved from their adultery by the priest ; while others caused masses to be said, and tapers and lamps to be burnt before the altar, to propitiate their ladies. Such was the light, in which religion was considered, by the poets of Provence. We see them fettered by the icy chains of superstition, but never animated by the fire of enthusiasm. Religion was a stranger to their hearts ; but the dread which it inspired, remained like a weight upon their souls. Sometimes, in foolish security, they made sport of this fear ; yet, when it again assumed its empire over them, they trembled at its influence. Never did their faith furnish them with a single brilliant image or animated sentiment. A few pieces on the crusades, to which the reader has already been referred, may, perhaps, be excepted ; but it is observable, that martial enthusiasm, the only enthusiasm which they display, is quite as conspicuous even in the war-songs of the same period, which have no reference to spiritual subjects.

It is not easy to account for the fact, but it is certain, that a romantic imagination was rarely discovered amongst the Troubadours; whilst the Trouvères, the poets and reciters of tales, in the countries on the north of the Loire, invented or perfected all the ancient romances of chivalry. The tales of the Troubadours have nothing romantic or warlike about them. They always relate to allegorical personages, Mercy, Loyalty, and Modesty, whose duty it is to speak, and not to act. In other poetical pieces of this kind, we are obliged to guess at the allegory, and to search for a key to the fiction; but here the moral stands perfectly naked, nor is it sufficiently interesting to prevent us from regretting that a thicker veil was not thrown over it.

Thus, the poetry of Provence had no resources which were not within itself; no classical allusions, no mythology, either native or borrowed, nor even a romantic imagination. It was a beautiful flower, springing up on a sterile soil; nor could any cultivation avail it, in the absence of its natural nourishment. The Greeks, it is true, who had no masters in their art, gave birth to their own inventions; but, in addition to the fact, that we cannot compare any other nation with the Greeks, so richly endowed as they were by nature, the culture of the latter was progressive. No foreign influence had driven them from their course. Their reason, their imagination, and their sensibility, were all developed at the same moment, and always preserved a happy harmony. Amongst the Provençals, on the other hand, the imagination had received a false direction, from their first mixture with the Arabians. Reason was entirely neglected, or perverted, by the study of school-theology, and of an unintelligible system of philosophy. Sentiment, abandoned to itself, was either weakened by monotony of expression, or perverted by the over-refined and affected language, which seemed to bear an affinity to that of the schools. Still, it is impossible to say, what might have been the influence of a single man of genius, upon the language and literature of Provence. Had Dante been born in the country of the Langue d'Oc; had he boldly united, in one great poem, all the high mythology of Catholicism, with the sentiments, the interests, and the passions of a knight, a statesman, and a crusader, he would have opened a mine of riches, unknown to his contemporaries. Number-

less imitators would have followed in his steps, and, by his sole influence, the Provençal language might still have been in existence, the most cultivated as well as the most ancient language of southern Europe. But, in these regions, fanaticism kindled a flame, which repelled the advancing steps of the human intellect, and the crusade against the Albigenses, which will form the subject of the next chapter, decided the destiny of Provence.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAR AGAINST THE ALBIGENSES — THE LAST PROVENÇAL POETS, IN LANGUEDOC AND CATALONIA.

THE period now arrived, when the cruelties of civil war and a persecution of the most implacable description, spread desolation over the country, in which the Provençal poetry had so lately flourished. The deadly hatred of the combatants, inducing devastation and carnage, soon overwhelmed the people, amongst whom the Gay Science had been cultivated, and banished poetry from the land of its birth. The Troubadours, whose sole means of subsistence were found in the hospitality and liberality of the nobles, were now welcomed to desolated castles, whose masters had been ruined by war, and often driven to despair, by the massacre of their families. Those, who associated with the conquerors, gradually imbibed their ferocious prejudices and their fanaticism. Like them, they delighted in blood. Poetry had no longer any charms for them, and even the language of love appeared to them out of nature. During the thirteenth century, the songs of the Troubadours are full of allusions to this fatal war, the fury of which had stifled their genius, perhaps, at the very period when it was about to be developed. The language and poetry of Provence were extinguished in blood.

The excessive corruption of the clergy had, as we have already seen, furnished a subject for the satirical powers of all the Troubadours. The cupidity, the dissimulation, and the baseness of that body, had rendered them odious both to the nobles and the people. The priests and monks incessantly employed themselves in despoiling the sick, the widowed, the

fatherless, and indeed, all, whom age, or weakness, or misfortune placed within their grasp; while they squandered in debauchery and drunkenness, the money which they extorted by the most shameful artifices. Thus, Raymond de Castelnau exclaims, "The clergy, in their covetousness, are aiming, every day, by their impositions, to shoe and to clothe themselves well. The great prelates are so eager to advance their fortunes, that they extend their dioceses, without any show of reason. If you hold an honourable fief of them, they immediately wish to seize it; and you cannot recover the proprietorship, unless you give them a sum of money, or enter into covenants more favourable to them.

"If God has willed the Black monks to be unrivalled in their good eating, and in their amours, and the White monks in their lying bulls, and the Templars and Hospitallers in pride, and the Canons in usury; I hold Saint Peter and Saint Andrew to have been egregious fools, for suffering so many torments for the sake of God; since all these people, also, are to be saved."*

The gentry had imbibed such a contempt for the corrupted clergy, that they were unwilling to educate their children to the priesthood; and they granted the benefices, in their gift, to their servants and bailiffs. "I had rather have been a priest than have done so disgraceful a thing," became a proverbial expression.†

* Clerzia vol cascun jorn per engal
Ab cobeitat ben caussar e vestir,
Els gran Prelats volon tant enantir
Que ses razo alargan lor deital.
E si tenet del lor un onrat fieu,
Volran l' aver, mas nol cobraretz leu
Si non lor datz una soma d' argen
O no lor faitz pus estrey covinen.

Si monges ners vol Dieus que sian ses par,
Per trop manjar ni per femnas tenir,
Ni monges blancs per bolas a mentir,
Ni per erguelb temple ni espital,
Ni canorgues por prestar a renieu;
Ben tenc per fol sant Peyre sant Andrieu,
Que sofriron per Dieu tan de turmen
Sais i venon ais'els a salvamen.

† See the *Histoire de Languedoc*, par les PP. Vic et Vaisette, t. iii p. 129. The word of a monk may be believed, when he relates, in

Whilst the respect for the Church had received so severe a shock, the Paulicians had introduced, from the East, a simpler faith and a greater purity of manners. The reformed Christian sect of the Paulicians had spread, during the seventh century, from Armenia, over all the provinces of the Greek empire. The persecution of Theodora, in 845, and of Basil the Macedonian, in 867 and 886, after having effected the destruction of more than a hundred thousand victims, compelled the remainder to seek refuge, some amongst the Mussulmans, and others amongst the Bulgarians. Once without the pale of persecution, their faith made the most rapid progress. The Bulgarians, who had established a considerable commerce between Germany and the Levant, by means of the Danube, spread their opinions over the north of Europe, and prepared the way for the Hussites of Bohemia; while those Paulicians, who had become subjects of the Mussulmans, insinuated themselves, through Spain, into the south of France and Italy. In Languedoc and Lombardy, the name of *Paterins* was given to them, on account of the sufferings to which they were exposed, wherever the Pontifical authority extended itself; and they afterwards received the name of Albigenses, from the numbers who inhabited the diocese of Alby. According to the conference, reported by the Abbé Foncaude,* these sectarians, who were accused of sharing in the doctrines of the Manichæans, with respect to the two principles, differed from the Church of Rome, merely in denying the sovereignty of the Pope, the powers of the priesthood, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and the existence of purgatory. Driven, by persecution, from the other parts of Europe, they enjoyed a wise toleration in the

very religious work, the corruption of the clergy and the contempt into which they had fallen. But the pious Benedictines, from whom we have borrowed these details, and many of those which follow, have other claims to our confidence. Few men have examined original documents and collected authorities, with the same zeal and indefatigable patience, and few have displayed so much impartiality, in their researches. Their attachment to learning seems to have corrected the prejudices of their order. It is true, we sometimes perceive that they possess knowledge which their habit does not permit them to communicate; but, with a small degree of critical acumen, we may collect, from their works alone, a very just idea of the history of the Albigenses.

* Hist. de Languedoc.

territories of the Count of Toulouse, the Viscount of Beziers, and amongst the Albigenses; and their numbers continually received accessions, by the harangues of Father Sicard Cellerier, one of their most eloquent pastors. At this period, the Provençals, who had been enriched by their commercial intercourse with the Moors and the Jews, and who had, of necessity, been thrown into contact with those people, respected the rights of conscience; whilst the inhabitants of the country to the north of the Loire, were completely subjected to the power of the priests and to the dominion of fanaticism. The Spaniards, more enlightened, still, than the Provençals, and not far removed from the period, when they had themselves been compelled to claim the freedom of opinion, under the Moorish yoke, were still more tolerant. They had not yet engaged in their tedious wars against the Church. A century before the Sicilian vespers, the kings of Aragon were the declared protectors of all who were persecuted by the papal power; and, in emulation of the kings of Castile, they were, at one time, the mediators for the Albigenses, and at another, their defenders in the field.

Missionaries were despatched into Higher Languedoc, in 1147 and 1181, to convert these heretics; but with little success, as long as arms were not resorted to. Every day, the reformed opinions gained strength. Bertrand de Saissac, the tutor to the young Viscount of Beziers, himself adopted them. They had spread even beyond Languedoc, and had gained many powerful partizans in the Nivernois. At length Innocent III. resolving to destroy these sectarians, whom he had exterminated in Italy, despatched, in the year 1198, two Cistercian monks, with the authority of Legates *a latere*, to discover them, and to bring them to justice. The monks, ambitious of extending the unprecedented powers with which they had been intrusted, not contented with attacking merely the heretics, whom they punished with exile and with confiscation of their goods, quarrelled with all the regular clergy, who had attempted to protect their country from such violent proceedings. They suspended the Archbishop of Narbonne and the Bishop of Beziers. They degraded the Bishops of Toulouse and of Viviers, and raised to the See of Toulouse, Folquet de Marseille, a Troubadour, who had gained some fame by his amatory verses, but who disgusted

with the world, had retired to the cloister, where he had fostered the passions of fanaticism and persecution.* Pierre de Castelnau, the most eager of the Pontifical Legates, astonished at his slow success in the conversion of the heretics, accused Raymond VI. Count of Toulouse, of favouring them ; because that prince, being of a mild and timid disposition, refused to lend himself to those sanguinary proceedings against them, which had been suggested to him. The anger of the priest, at last, induced him to excommunicate the Count in 1207, and to place his states under an interdict. In a conference, which took place a year later, he again treated him with the most violent outrage ; and it was, doubtless, upon this occasion, that he quarrelled with one of the Count's gentlemen, who followed him to the banks of the Rhone, on his return, and killed him on the 15th of January, 1208. The murder of this monk, himself polluted with blood, was the completion of the misfortunes of Languedoc. Innocent III. addressed a letter to the King of France, and to all the princes and most powerful barons, as well as to the metropolitans and the bishops, exhorting them to avenge the blood which had been shed, and to extirpate the heresy. All the indulgences and pardons, which were usually granted to the crusaders, were promised to those who exterminated these unbelievers, a thousand times more detestable than the Turks and the Saracens. More than three hundred thousand men appeared in arms, to accomplish this butchery ; and the first nobles of France, the most virtuous, and, perhaps, the mildest of her aristocracy, believed that they were rendering an acceptable service to God, in thus arming themselves against their brethren. Raymond VI. terrified at this storm, submitted to every thing that was required of him. He delivered up his fortresses, and even marched to the crusade, against the most faithful of his own subjects ; and yet, notwithstanding this disgraceful weakness, he did not escape the hatred or the vengeance of the clergy. But Raymond Roger, Viscount of Beziers, his youthful and generous nephew, without sharing himself in the heretical opinions, would not consent to the atrocities, which were about to be committed in his states. He encouraged his subjects to defend them-

* As to Poiquet, see *Millot*, vol. i. p. 179, &c.

selves; and shutting himself up in Carcassone, and delivering Beziers to the care of his lieutenants, he awaited, with firmness, the attack of the crusaders.

I am unwilling to detail the progress of this frightful war, which yet possesses a strange interest. It is only connected with the subject of the present work, inasmuch as it caused the destruction of Provençal poetry. Beziers was taken by assault, on the 22d of July, 1209; and fifteen thousand inhabitants, according to the narrative which the Abbot of the Cistercians transmitted to the Pope,* or sixty thousand, according to other contemporary writers, were put to the sword. The city itself, after a general massacre, not only of its inhabitants, but likewise of the neighbouring peasantry, who had thrown themselves into it, was reduced to ashes. An old Provençal historian has augmented, by the simplicity of his language, the horror of this picture. †

"They entered the city of Beziers, where they murdered more people than was ever known in the world. For they spared neither young nor old, nor infants at the breast. They killed and murdered all of them; which being seen by the said people of the city, they that were able did retreat into the great church of St. Nazarius, both men and women. The chaplains thereof, when they retreated, caused the bells to ring, until every body was dead. But neither the sound of

* It was the same Arnold, abbot of the Cistercians, whose narrative is here cited, who, when he was asked, before the city was taken, how he could separate the heretics from the catholics, replied, "*Kill them all; God will know who belong to him.*"

† Dins la villa de Beziers son intrats, ou foue fait lo plus grand murtre de gens que jamas fossa fait en tout lo monde; car aqui non era sparniat vieil ni jove; non pas los enfan que popavan: los toavan et murtrisian, la quella causa vesen por los dits de la villa, se retireguen los que poudian dins la grant gleysa de san Nazary, tant homes que femes. La ont los capelas de aquella se retirereguen, fasen tirar las campanas, quand tout lo monde fossa mort. Mais non y aguet son ni campana, ni capela revestit, ni clere, que tout non passis per lo trinchet de l'espaia, que ung tant solament non scapet, que non fossen morts et tuats; que fouc la plus grant pietat que jamay despey se sie ausida et facha; et la villa piliada, meteguen lo foc per tota la villa, talamen que touta es pillada et arsa, ainsin que encaras de presan, et que non y demoret causa viventa al mondo, que fouc una cruela vengança, vist que lo dit Visconte non era Eretge, ni de lor cepte. (*Preuves de l'Histoire de Languedoc*, t. iii. p. 11.)

This prose, which is properly the Languedoc dialect, is much more intelligible than the verses of the Troubadours.

the bells, nor the chaplains in their priestly habits, nor the clerks, could hinder all from being put to the sword; one only escaped, for all the rest were slain, and died. Nothing so pitiable was ever heard of or done; and when the city had been pillaged, it was set on fire, so that it was all pillaged and burned, even as it appears at this day. No living thing was left, which was a cruel vengeance, seeing that the said Viscount was neither a heretic, nor of their sect."

This fragment has been selected, for the purpose of shewing that the Provençal language, at that time, could boast not only of poets, but, also, of prose writers. It was a formed language, like the Italian, and, like that tongue, its merit was its simplicity. The anonymous historian, from whom the above extract is borrowed, reminds us of the Florentine historian, Villani, by his candour and his powers of description. The language might, perhaps, have become more pure and fixed, and the prose writers might have produced a revolution in their literature, had not these massacres and the subsequent servitude of Provence, destroyed the national character.

The courage of the Viscount of Beziers did not fail, even under these horrible circumstances; and the brave inhabitants of Carcassone renewed their oath of attachment to him, and of fidelity to one another. In several sallies, they had the advantage; and at length Peter II. of Aragon offered himself as mediator, soliciting the forbearance of the crusaders to the viscount, who was his friend and relation. All the favour which could be procured from the priests, who presided over the army, was an offer to allow thirteen of the inhabitants, including the viscount, to leave the city. The remainder were reserved for a butchery similar to that of Beziers. The answer of the viscount was, that he would consent to be flayed alive, before he would abandon a single one of his fellow-citizens; and he persisted in defending himself with unconquerable valour. He was, at last, betrayed by a pretended negotiation, and made prisoner, in contempt of the safe conduct by which he was allowed liberty to treat; and being delivered to the Count de Montford, he was, ultimately, poisoned in prison. The inhabitants of Carcassonne, according to the anonymous chronicler before cited, made their escape, in the night, over the fortifications. According to

others, they were permitted to leave the city in their shirts, with the exception of four hundred who were burnt, and fifty who were hanged. The legate was desirous of immediately creating a new Viscount of Beziers, but the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Nevers, and the Count de Saint Paul, ashamed of the treachery and crimes to which their success was owing, refused the odious gift. Simon de Montfort alone, the most ferocious, the most ambitious, and the most perfidious of all the crusaders, consented to bear the title. He immediately did homage to the Pope, procured the rightful viscount to be delivered to him, that he might be put out of the way, and created a ground of quarrel with Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, whom, in his turn, he wished to despoil of his territories. But we shall not follow this conqueror into the frightful wars, with which he devastated the whole of the south of France. They, who escaped from the sacking of the towns, were sacrificed by the faggot. From 1209 to 1229 nothing was seen but massacres and tortures. Religion was overthrown, knowledge extinguished, and humanity trodden under foot. In the midst of these misfortunes, the ancient house of Toulouse became extinct, on the death of Raymond VII., in 1249; and that county, formerly a sovereignty, was united to the crown of France by Saint Louis. A few years before, in 1245, the family of Provence had failed, in the person of Raymond Berenger IV.; and Charles of Anjou, the ferocious conqueror of the kingdom of Naples, had claimed that territory as his inheritance. Thus, the sovereign families disappeared in the south of France; and the Provençals, and all the people who spoke the Langue d'Oc, became subject to a rival nation, to which they had always entertained the most violent aversion. In their servitude, a few plaintive songs of grief were heard; but the muses fled from a soil polluted with carnage.

A few Troubadours were found amongst the ranks of the persecutors, the most celebrated of whom, was the ferocious Folquet, Bishop of Toulouse, who rendered himself more odious by his infamous treacheries than even by the punishments which he inflicted. Betraying alike his prince and his flock, he entered without hesitation into all the intrigues of Simon de Montfort, for despoiling Raymond VI. of his estates. He organized, even in Toulouse, a band of assassins, who

were called the White Company, at the head of whom he marched. for the purpose of massacring all who were suspected of favouring heretical opinions. This band was united to the army of Simon de Montfort, when, on two different occasions, he besieged Toulouse. At the second siege, all the crusaders and the allies of De Montfort besought him to be merciful ; but Folquet alone advised him to despoil the citizens of their goods, and to throw the most distinguished of them into prison. When he entered Toulouse, he announced to the inhabitants that he had obtained their pardon, and invited them to throw themselves at the feet of De Montfort. The citizens rushed out of the gates in crowds ; but, as they entered the camp, they were loaded with chains, and Folquet took advantage of their absence to deliver up the city to pillage. A sufficient number of the armed inhabitants yet remained to offer resistance. The combat again commenced, and its result was doubtful. Folquet presented himself before the enraged inhabitants, and solemnly engaged to set all the prisoners at liberty ; an engagement, which he guaranteed by his own oath and that of the Abbot of the Cistercians. But, at the same time, he demanded that the citizens should deliver up to him their arms and fortifications. The inhabitants were weak enough to rely once more on the oath of their bishop, but no sooner were their arms surrendered, than Folquet, by his pontifical authority, absolved Simon de Montfort from the oath which he had taken. The prisoners were thrown into dungeons, where nearly the whole of them perished, and the city, under pain of being razed, was subjected to a contribution of thirty thousand marks of silver. Folquet died in 1231, and his crimes were thought to have secured him a reception in heaven. He is one of the most conspicuous saints of the Cistercians, and the title of *Bienheureux* was conferred upon him. Petrarch mentions him with distinction in his Triumph of Love, and Dante sees him in Paradise amongst the souls of the elect. As a Troubadour, we have no remains of this fanatic, except some love-verses addressed to Azalais de Roquemartine, the wife of the Viscount of Marseilles, whom he had attempted to seduce.

Izarn, a Dominican missionary and inquisitor, preserved his character, with greater consistency, in his poetry. We find him, in about eight hundred Alexandrine verses, sus-

taining a dispute with one of the Albigenses, whom he is desirous of converting.* His style of reasoning is, to treat his adversary in the most insulting manner; to present to him, all at once, the most unintelligible dogmas; to exact his submission to them; and to menace him, at the end of every sentence, with death, torture, and hell.†

As you declare you won't believe, 'tis fit that you should burn,
And as your fellows have been burnt, that you should blaze in turn;
And as you've disobey'd the will of God and of St. Paul,
Which ne'er was found within your heart, nor pass'd your teeth at all,
The fire is lit, the pitch is hot, and ready is the stake,
That through these tortures, for your sins, your passage you may take.

Could the horrors of the Inquisition be forgotten, this poem alone would be sufficient to recall them.

But the greater part of the Troubadours beheld with equal detestation, both the crusade and the domination of the French. Tomiez and Palazis, two gentlemen of Tarascon, invoked, in their *sirventes*, the succour of the King of Aragon in favour of the Count of Toulouse. They denounced eternal infamy on the Prince of Orange, who had abandoned the Count of Toulouse, his immediate lord; and they exhorted the Provençals, that it was better to defend themselves in the field than to suffer death in the dungeon. A martial ballad, the burthen of which was "Lords! be stout, and trust in succour!" transports us, as it were, into the

* The following is the commencement of this poem:

Aiso fou las novas del heretic.

Dignas me tu heretic, parlap me un petit,
Que tu non parlaras gaire, que ja t'sia grazit,
Si per forza not ve, segon i avcuz auzit,
Segon lo mien veiaire, ben at Dieu escarnit,
Tau fe e ton baptisme renegat e gucrpit,
Car crezes que Diables t' a format et bastit,
E tan mal a obrat, e tan mal a ordit
Por dar salvatio; falsamen as mentit,
Et de malvais escola as apris e auzit
E ton crestianisme as falsat e delit.

† E s' aquest no vols crcyre vec t' el foc arzirat
Che art tos companhos. . . . . .
Con es de Dicu e San Paul non c'est obediens
Ni 't pot entrar en cor, ni passar per las dens,
Per qu' el foc s'aparelha e la peis el turmens
Per on deu espassar. . . . . .

field of battle, amongst the unfortunate Provençals, who were defending themselves against this infamous crusade.* Paulet de Marseilles does not bewail the crusade, which was then terminated, but the subjection of Provence to Charles of Anjou. The poet deplores the dishonour which that country had sustained, in taking part in the war of Naples, and thus staining itself with the judicial murder of Conradin and the imprisonment of Henry of Castile. In a very curious pastoral, he expresses the universal hatred of the people for their new masters; his attachment to the Spaniards, and his persuasion that the King of Aragon was alone entitled to the sovereignty of Provence.† Boniface III., of Castellan, seems to feel, still more vividly, the affront put upon the Provençals by this foreign usurpation; while, at the same time, he accuses them of having merited by their cowardice, the opprobrium of being subjected to a rival nation. He attempts, by every mode, to rouse them from this langour; and he excites to vengeance James I. of Aragon, whose father, Peter II., had been slain in 1213, at the battle of Muret, whilst fighting in defence of the Count of Toulouse and the Albigenses. Castellan at length succeeded in rousing Marseilles to revolt, and placed himself at the head of the insurgents; but Charles of Anjou having menaced the city with a siege, Castellan was delivered up. He was beheaded, and his goods were confiscated. The great satirist of the Provençals, Pierre Cardinal, whose verses display the most impetuous passions, seems to have been struck with horror at the conduct of the Crusaders. Sometimes he paints the desolation of the country, which was the theatre of the war; at other times, he attempts to inspire the Count of Toulouse with courage. "Neither the Archbishop of Narbonne, nor the King of France, have the power to change one so wicked, into a man of honour (speaking of Simon de Montfort.) They may bestow gold and silver, and garments, and wines, and viands upon him; but, for goodness, God alone can give it. Would you know what share he will have in the spoils of this war?—the cries, the terrors the frightful spectacles, which he has beheld, the misfortunes

Millot, iii. 45, 49, &c. [A translation of the whole of this curious piece will be found at the end of the chapter.—*Tr.*]

† *Millot*, iii. 141, &c.

and the evils which he has occasioned, these will form the equipage with which he will return from the battle."* De Montford perished in an action before Toulouse, on the 25th of June, 1218, though not without having lived to enjoy, for a considerable time, the bloody spoils of Raymond VI.

During the period at which the country of the Langue d'Oc was in its most flourishing state, and the Counts of Provence and Toulouse, rivalling one another in riches and power, invited the most distinguished poets to their courts, all the neighbouring princes and people attempted to make themselves familiar with a language, which seemed to be appropriated to love and gallantry. The dialects of the other countries were, hitherto, by no means fixed, and were regarded as vulgar, when compared with the pure Provençal. All the north of Italy received with eagerness the lessons of the Troubadours. Azzo VII. of Este, invited them to the court of Ferrara, and Gerard de Camino, to Treviso ; while the Marquis of Montferrat introduced them into his kingdom of Thessalonica, in Greece. The crusade against the Albigenses, however, entirely put an end to the influence of the Provençals. The country which had given birth to so many elegant poets, was now only a scene of carnage and torture. For a long period after the first war, the massacres and persecutions, as well as the resistance of the unfortunate victims, continued even down to the reign of Louis XIV.. when the war of the Camisards may be said to be the last scene of the fatal tragedy of the Albigenses. A language which appeared only to serve the purpose of repeating funereal lamentations, was heard with a kind of horror ; while the Italians, perhaps, believed that it was exclusively applied to spreading the venomous doctrines of heresy. Charles of Anjou, moreover, in the middle of this century, possessed himself of the king-

* L' arsivesque de Narbona
Nil Rey non an tan de sen
Que de malvaiza persona
Puescan far home valen ;
Dar li podon aur o arjen
E draps, e vi e anona,
Mais lo bel essenhamen
Ha sel a cui Dieus lo dona.
Tals a sus el cap corona
E porta blanc vestimen
Quel' volontatz es felona,
Com de lops e de serpen ;
E qui tols ni trai ni men
Ni aussiz ni empoizona (†)
Ad aquo es ben parven
Quals voler hi abotona.
. . . . . .

(†) Alluding to the death of the Viscount de Béziers.

dom of Naples, carrying with him in his train the principal nobility of Provence; and the latter, consequently, became familiar with the Italian language, which at that period, was assuming a more polished shape. This ferocious monarch would have contributed little to the advancement of poetry, whether he favoured the language of his wife, the Provençal, or that of his new subjects, the Italians; for his talent was rather to destroy than to create, and he sacrificed the prosperity of the beautiful country which his wife had brought him as her dowry, to his passion for war and his unmeasured ambition. He loaded the people with excessive taxes, destroyed the liberty and privileges of his barons, dragged into Italy all his subjects who were capable of bearing arms, and desolated Provence,* for the purpose of carrying desolation into the heart of new territories. In his reign, the Courts of Love were abolished, which had so long excited the emulation of poets, by granting the most brilliant rewards to talent; and which had largely contributed to the refinement of manners, by inflicting, with the assistance of public opinion, a punishment upon those who trespassed against the laws of delicacy. Not only temporary Courts of Love were erected in all the manors of the greater barons, after every fête and tourney, but some of them appear to have received a more solemn form, and a more durable existence. Thus, mention is made of the Court of Love of Pierrefeu, in which Stephanette des Baux, daughter of the Count of Provence, presided, and which was composed of ten of the most considerable ladies of the country; of the Court of Love of

* This terrific prince was, however, a poet, for at this period, to which we have given the title of barbarous, all the sovereigns and the powerful nobles were compelled to sacrifice to the muses. In the manuscripts in the Royal Library there exists a love-song by him in the Langue d'Oil, which has nothing very remarkable about it. The following lines form the conclusion.

Un seul confort me tient en bon espoir,
Et c'est de ce qu'oncques ne la guerpi,
Servie l'ai tojours à mon pooir
N'oncques vers autr ai pensé fors qu'à li;
Et à tout ce, me met en non châloir;
Et si, sai bien ne l'ai pas desservi.
Si me convient attendre son voloir
Et atendrai come loyal ami.'

Par li quens d'Anjou, p. 148.

Romanin, presided over by the lady of that name; and of the Courts of Aix and of Avignon, the latter of which was established under the immediate protection of the Pope. These four courts appear to have been permanent bodies, which assembled at fixed periods, and acquired a high reputation for delicacy and gallantry; and to them were submitted such love-causes as the inferior courts did not dare to decide. The *Arrêts d'Amour* were religiously preserved; and Martial d'Auvergne, in 1480, made a compilation of fifty-one of these *arrts*, which were afterwards translated into Spanish by Diego Grazian.*

But all this solemnity, this studious attention to gallantry and poetry, ceased in the absence of the sovereign, who adopted a foreign language, and drew to the court of Naples the knights and ladies, who used to combat at the tourneys and sit in the Courts of Love. The successors of Charles I., though more literary in their habits, were more entirely Italian. Charles II., and especially Robert, patronized the literature of Italy. The latter was the friend and protector of Petrarch, who elected him as judge before he received the poetical crown. Some Provençal poems, addressed to him, still remain. Crescimbeni makes mention, amongst others, of a sonnet, in his honour, by Guillaume des Amalrics;† but this little poem, which is composed in the Italian style, gives no idea of the ancient poetry of Provence. Joanna I. of Naples, the grandaughter of Robert, appears, during her

* [If we are to take the *arrêts* of Martial D'Auvergne as real specimens of the proceedings in the Courts of Love, they certainly could not have been of that grave and solemn cast which M. De Sismondi and other writers would lead us to believe. Nor do they give us, by any means, a favourable idea of the *delicacy* of the fair judges. The most ridiculous questions are propounded and argued in the gravest manner, and sometimes fictitious personages, as Love and Death, are introduced. If, indeed, these *arrêts* be the original judgments of the Courts of Love, it proves that all their proceedings were mere jests and *badinage;* but probably the work was intended by the author as a satire upon the real courts. It is true, as Sismondi observes in his note on this passage, that the same unfavourable impression is produced in perusing all that has been left us by the Troubadours, after having been so much applauded, and supplied such a variety of subjects for brilliant fictions, we approach them with enthusiasm, it is seldom that we leave them without disgust.—*Tr.*]

† *Vite de' Poeti Provenzali*. p. 131.

residence in Provence, to have made an attempt to reanimate the former ardour of the Troubadours, and to infuse new life into the Provençal poetry. The beautiful Joanna, whose heart was proved to be so tender and passionate, was, certainly, the fittest of all the princesses of Europe to preside in the Courts of Love, and to discuss questions of sentiment. Her stay in Provence, however, was not of long duration, and, during all that period, she suffered misfortunes and oppression; while her return to Naples, in 1348, separated her again from the poets whom she had patronized. Joanna, on being dethroned, thirty years afterwards, adopted a French prince, Louis I. of Anjou, to whom, however, she could only assure the possession of Provence; the kingdom of Naples passing to the house of Duraz. But though Provence, after a separation of a century and a half, again possessed her sovereign in her bosom, literature experienced no protection from him. Louis spoke the Langue D'Oui, or the dialect of the north of France, and had no taste for the poetry of the Langue D'Oc; and, moreover, he was engaged, as were afterwards his son Louis II. and his grandson Louis III., in a series of unfortunate wars in Italy. His other grandson, René, who in his turn assumed, in the fifteenth century, the title of King of Naples and Count of Provence, endeavoured, it is true, with great earnestness, to revive the poetry of Provence. The effort, however, was too late; the race of the Troubadours was extinct; and the invasions of the English, who desolated France, did not dispose the minds of the people to renew the cultivation of the Gay Science. It is, however, to the zeal of this king that we owe the Lives of the Troubadours, which were collected for him by the Monk of the Isles of Gold.

If the establishment of the sovereign of Provence in Italy was so deadly a blow to the Provençal language, the establishment of an Italian sovereign in Provence was no less fatal to it. At the commencement of the fourteenth century, the court of Rome was transferred to Avignon. The Popes, it is true, who, for seventy years filled the pontifical chair while it was fixed at that place, were all of them Frenchmen by birth, and inhabitants of the country where the Langue D'Oc was spoken. But, like the sovereigns of Rome, and of a great part of Italy, their courts were composed of Italians; and the

Tuscan language became so familiar in the city which they inhabited, that Petrarch, the first poet of the age, who lived at Avignon, and loved a Provençal lady, never employed any other language than the Italian to express his attachment..

Whilst the native poetry, and even the language of Provence, properly so called, were every day declining, reiterated efforts were made, in the county of Toulouse, to re-illume the ancient flame. The house of Saint-Giles, the aneient counts, was extinct, and most of the great feudatories had either perished, or been ruined by the crusades. The castles were no longer the asylum of pleasures and chivalric festivals, although some of the towns were recovering from the calamities of war. Toulouse eould again boast of her numerous population, her riches, her elegance, and her taste for letters and poetry.

In southern France, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, the nobility gave to the age its charaeter and spirit. In the two centuries which succeeded, the inhabitants of the towns assumed a more important rank. Their privileges had been augmented by the sovereign. They were allowed to raise fortifications, to choose their own magistrates, and to possess a militia. The erown was thus enabled either to oppose the powerful barons, whom it wished to humble; or to defend itself in the wars between France and England; or, lastly, to raise, from this source, increased taxes, since the principal part of the revenues of the state were derived from the towns. The inhabitants speedily imbibed republican sentiments; the principles of equality became general; and a respect for property, and an enlightened proteetion of industry and activity, were the consequences. Zeal for the public good, and a great degree of the *esprit de corps*, united the citizens in their patriotic bonds. The state was much better governed; but the poetical spirit had declined. It is not under the operation of the wisest laws, and in times of good order and prosperity, that the imagination of a people is most powerfully developed. Idleness is much better suited to the poet than activity; and that vigilant and paternal administration which forms good fathers, good merchants, good artisans, and honest citizens, was much less calculated to elicit the genius of the Troubadours, than a life spent in wandering from eastle to castle; in alternate intercourse with the nobles and the

people, the ladies and the shepherds; and amid the enjoyments of luxury, rendered more exquisite by poverty.

The good citizens of Toulouse, or of Marseilles, had their business to superintend and their livelihood to earn; and if a man devoted himself, from his youth, to singing at festivals, or meditating in groves, he was looked upon by his fellow-citizens either as a fool, or as one who wished to live on the contributions of others. No esteem was felt for a man, who, when he was capable of becoming independent by his own labour, chose to owe his subsistence to the bounty of the great. Reason and good sense are both the accompaniments of prose and the most brilliant faculties of the human mind, are not always those which are most requisite to our happiness.

Still the *Capitouls de Toulouse*, the name by which the chief-magistrates of that city were distinguished, were desirous, for the honour of their country, of preserving the brilliant reputation which it had formerly enjoyed for poetical studies, and which was now about to expire. They were not, perhaps, themselves, very sensible of the charms of verse and harmony; but they were unwilling that it should be said, that, under their administration, the flame, which had shed such lustre on the reigns of the Counts of Toulouse, was extinguished. A few versifiers of little note had assumed, at Toulouse, the name of Troubadours, and were accustomed, half-yearly, to assemble together in the gardens of the Augustine monks, where they read their compositions to one another. In 1323, these persons resolved to form themselves into a species of academy *del Gai Saber*, and they gave it the title of *La Sobregaya Companhia dels sept Trobadors de Tolosa*. This "most gay society" was eagerly joined by the *Capitouls*, or venerable magistrates, of Toulouse, who wished, by some public festival, to reanimate the spirit of poetry.*

* If the celebrated *Clémence Isaure*, whose eulogy was pronounced every year in the assembly of the Floral Games, and whose statue, crowned with flowers, ornamented their festivals, be not merely an imaginary being, she appears to have been the soul of these little meetings, before either the magistrates had noticed them or the public were invited to attend them. But neither the circulars of the *Sobregaya Companhia*, nor the registers of the magistrates, make any mention of her; and, notwithstanding all the zeal with which, at a subsequent period, the glory of founding the Floral Games has been attributed to her, her existence is still problematical.

A circular letter was addressed to all the cities of the Langue d'Oc, to give notice that, on the 1st of May, 1324, a golden violet would be decreed, as a prize, to the author of the best poem in the Provençal language. The circular is written both in prose and verse; in the name as well of "the very gay company of Troubadours," as of "the very grave assembly of Capitouls." The gravity of the latter is manifested by their wonderful display of learning, and by the number of their quotations: for when the Gay Science was transported from the castles into the cities, it was united to a knowledge of antiquity, and of those studies which were again beginning to be cultivated. Harmony and sentiment alone were not now all-sufficient. On the other hand, the Troubadours cited the scriptures, in defence of their recreations. "Is it not," said they, "pleasing to God, our Creator, and our Sovereign Lord and Master, that man should render homage to him in joy and gladness of heart, as the Psalmist has borne testimony when he says, 'Sing and be glad in the Lord.' The crowds which collected on the first of May, were prodigious. The magistrates, the neighbouring nobility, and the common people, all assembled in the garden of the Augustines, to hear the songs publicly read, which were intended to dispute the prize. The violet was adjudged to Arnaud Vidal of Castelnaudary, for his song in honour of the Holy Virgin, and the successful candidate was immediately declared a Doctor in the Gay Science. Such was the origin of the Floral Games. In 1355, the Capitouls announced that, instead of one prize, they would give three. The violet of gold was reserved for the best song. An eglantine of silver, not the flower of the rose, but of the Spanish jasmine, was promised to the author of the best *sirvente*, or of the most beautiful pastoral; and lastly, the *flor de gaug*, or joy-flower, the yellow and odoriferous flower of the thorny acacia, was to be bestowed upon the writer of the best ballad. These flowers were more than a foot high, and were carried on a pedestal of silver gilt, upon which were engraved the arms of the city. It seems that in copying these flowers always from the same model, the artists forgot what they originally represented: the eglantine became a columbine, and the joy-flower a marigold. The Academy of the Floral Games has survived to the present day, although it seldom crowns any but French poets. Its secretary is always

a doctor of laws, and its rules are denominated the Laws of Love. The name of Troubadour is still heard there, and the ancient forms of Provençal poetry, the song, the *sirvente*, and the ballad, are preserved with reverence. No man of real talent, however, has signalized himself amongst the fraternity; and as for the Troubadours, properly so called, the chanters of love and of chivalry, who bore from castle to castle, and from tourney to tourney, their own verses and the fame of their ladies, the race was extinct before the commencement of the Floral Games.

In another quarter, however, a flourishing kingdom was daily making rapid steps towards power, prosperity, and military glory. The kingdom of Aragon had preserved the Provençal language, and placed her fame in the cultivation of that literature. The employment of that tongue, in all the acts of government, was considered, nearly to our own times, as one of the most precious privileges which that country possessed. Marriage, succession, and conquest, had united many rich provinces under the dominion of the kings of Aragon; originally, merely the chiefs of a few Christian refugees, who had escaped into the mountains to avoid the Moors. Petronille, in 1137, carried the crown of Aragon to Raymond Berenger V., then sovereign of Provence, of Catalonia, of Cerdagne, and of Roussillon. In 1220, their descendants conquered the islands of Majorca, Minorca, and Ivica; and, in 1238, the kingdom of Valencia. Sicily fell under their dominion in 1282, and, in 1323, they conquered Sardinia. At the period when all these kingdoms were united under one crown, the Catalans were the hardiest navigators of the Mediterranean. Their commercial relations were very extended. They had frequent intercourse with the Greek empire, and were the constant rivals of the Genoese, and the no less faithful friends of the Venetians. Their reputation in arms was as brilliant as in the arts of peace. Not content with fighting the battles of their own country, they sought opportunities of practising their military skill in foreign service, and exercised their valour in combats, in which they had no sort of interest. The redoubtable soldiery of the Almogavares, issuing out of Aragon, carried terror into Italy and Greece. They vanquished the Turks, and humbled Constantinople; conquering Athens and Thebes, and destroying

in 1312, in the battle of the Cephisus, the remnant of the French cavaliers who had formerly overthrown the Greek empire. The Aragonese succeeded in rendering their liberties secure and respected by their chiefs. Even the kings themselves were under the dominion of a supreme judge, called the *Justicia*, who girt on the sword in their support, if they were faithful, and against them, if they abandoned their duty. The four members of the Cortes, by virtue of the privilege of union, similar to that of the confederation of Poland, had the power of legally opposing force and resistance to any usurped authority. Their religious freedom was equal to their civil immunities; and, to preserve it, the Aragonese did not scruple to brave, for the space of two centuries, the Papal excommunications. This bold and troubled life, this constant success in every enterprise, this national glory, which was continually encreasing, were much better fitted to inflame the imagination, and to sustain a poetical spirit, than the prudent, but confined and citizen-like life of the good people of Toulouse. Many celebrated Troubadours issued from the kingdoms of Aragon and Catalonia, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and on the extinction of the Troubadours, the Aragonese displayed a new kind of talent. The Provençal, or rather the Catalan, literature did not die with the poets of Provence.

One of the most celebrated of those who cultivated the art of poetry, after the disappearance of the Troubadours, was Don Henri d'Aragon, Marquis of Villena, who died in 1434, at an advanced age. His marquisate, the most ancient in Spain, was situated on the confines of the kingdoms of Castile and Valencia; and, in fact, Villena belonged to both the monarchies. In both, he filled the most important offices, and governed them alternately during the minorities of their princes; and in both, after having been the favourite of the kings, he was persecuted and despoiled of his property. During his administration, he made some attempts to awaken a taste for letters, and to unite the study of ancient literature to the cultivation of Romance poetry. He persuaded John I., of Aragon, to establish. in his states, an academy, similar to the Floral Games of Toulouse, in order to reanimate the ardour of the Troubadours, who were now rapidly declining. The Academy of Toulouse dispatched, in the year 1390, two

Doctors of Love to Barcelona, to found in that city a Branch Academy. All the rules, the laws, and the judgments of Love were adopted, and the Floral Games commenced at Barcelona; but the civil war soon afterwards interrupted them. Henri de Villena, on the establishment of peace, attempted to re-open his favourite academy at Tortosa. In the midst of all the occupations in which his turbulent political career engaged him, he found time to write a treatise on poetry for this academy, which he entitled *De la Gaya Ciencia*, and in which he explained, with more erudition than taste, the laws which the Troubadours had observed in the composition of their verses, and which the Italians, in their application of them, were now beginning to refine. Notwithstanding all his exertions, his academy was of short duration, and expired, probably, with himself. Villena likewise composed, about the year 1412, a still more curious work. It was a comedy; probably the only one ever written in the Provençal language, and one of the first which we find in modern literature. It was composed on occasion of the marriage of the King of Aragon, Ferdinand I. The characters were all allegorical, such as Truth, Justice, Peace, and Mercy; and the work, no doubt, possessed very little interest. It is, however, not the less an object of curiosity, as having prepared the way, together with the French mysteries and moralities, for that career which more modern poets have run with so much glory.

Ausias March, of Valencia, who died about 1450, is entitled to the second place amongst the Catalan Poets. He has been called the Petrarch of Catalonia, and is said to have equalled the lover of Laura in elegance, in brilliancy of expression, and in harmony; and while, like him, he contributed to the formation of his language, which he carried to a high degree of polish and perfection, he possessed more real feeling, and did not suffer himself to be seduced by a passion for *concetti* and false brilliancy. By a strange coincidence of circumstances, we are also told, that his poetry, like Petrarch's, forms two classes; the pieces composed during the life of his mistress, and those which were written on her death. The lady, whose name was Theresa de Momboy, was of a noble family in Valencia. Like Petrarch, also, Ausias March beheld his mistress, for the first time, during the celebration of service, in a church, on Good-Friday; unless we must

suppose that this was a fictitious circumstance, adopted by the poet in imitation of his great master. His Theresa, however, did not resemble Laura in one point, for she was unfaithful to her lover; from which we must conclude that she was at one period attached to him.

Although Ausias March is one of the few Catalan poets whose works I have been able to procure, yet a rapid and imperfect perusal of poems, written in a foreign language, has scarcely qualified me to pass any judgment upon his compositions. Yet the similarity between Petrarch and this poet appears to me very surprising. Ausias March evidently possesses more of the spirit of French literature than of the Romance taste. He seems to be infinitely less studious, than the Italians generally are, of employing those real or fictitious ornaments of poetry, comparisons and *concetti*. From thought and philosophy, on the contrary, he derives his principal beauties. Instead of colouring all his ideas, so as to make them harmonize with the senses, he generalises them, he reasons upon them, and often loses himself in abstraction. Although his language differs from the French more than that of the Troubadours, its construction is much more clear. In his verse, he has preserved, with great correctness, the forms and the metres of the ancient poets. The collection of his works, which is divided into three parts, *Poems on Love*, *Poems on Death*, and *Moral Poems*, contains merely songs, which are usually in seven stanzas, followed by an envoy, which he calls a *tornada*. It is due to the high reputation of Ausias March, which has been too long forgotten, to his admitted superiority over all the writers of the Provençal language, and to the extreme rarity of his works, to present a few fragments of them to the reader. In the second of his Love songs, he tells us that his heart vacillated a long time between two fair ladies.

As he who seeks for viands to appease
His hunger, and beholds, on some fair tree,
Two ruddy apples bloom deliciously,
On both of which he eagerly would seize,
Is forced, ere he the luscious dainty prove,
To choose or this or that; even so am I
Smit with the love of two fair dames, and sigh
That I must choose, ere I can taste of love.*

* Axi com cell qui desija vianda
Per apagar sa perillosa fam,

E veu

As when the sea groans heavily and cries,
When two contending winds sweep o'er its breast,
One from the East, the other from the West,
Till the one yielding to the other, dies.
Even so two mighty passions, angrily,
Have long contended in my breast, until
Obeying the high dictates of my will.
I followed one—that one was, love to thee !

There is, generally, much nature in the expression of Ausias March; and this, instead of injuring the vigour of the sentiment, adds to its vivacity, even more than the most brilliant metaphors could have done. The following stanza appears to be an illustration of this remark.

Abandoning the Troubadours' false verse,
Who trespass o'er the modest bounds of truth,
I must repress the wishes of my youth,
Since words are vain thy virtues to rehearse.*
All I could say to those, who know thee not,
Were little worth; they could not credit me;
And those that knowing thee, live not for thee,
Did *they* believe, how sad would be their lot.

E veu dos poms de fruyt en un bell ram
E son desig egualment loss demanda,
Nol complira fins part haja legida
Si que l'desig vers l'un fruyt se decant;
Axi m'a pres dues dones amant,
Mas elegesch per haver d'amor vida.
Si com la mar se plang greument e crida
Com dos forts vents la baten egualment,
Hu de Levant e l'altre de Ponent,
E dura tant fins l'um vent la jequida
Sa força gran per lo mas poderos:
Dos grans dezigs han combatut ma pensa,
Mas lo voler vers un seguir dispensa;
Yo l'vos publich, amar dretament vos.

* Leixant a part le stil dels trobados
Qui per escalf trespasen veritat,
E sostrahent mon voler affectat
Perque nom trob dire l' que trobe en vos.
Tot mon parlar als que no us havran vista
Res noy valvra, car fe noy donaran;
E los vehents que dins vos no vevran
En crevre mi lur alma sera triste.

In the elegies *(Obres de Mort)* of this poet, there is a tranquillity and reflection, a sort of philosophical grief, which, though it, perhaps, is not quite just, gives an idea of deep feeling.

The hands, which never spare, have snatch'd thee hence,
Cutting the frail thread of thy tender life,
And bearing thee from out this scene of strife,
Obedient still to fate's dark ordinance.
All that I see and feel now turns to pain,
When I remember thee I loved so well;
Yet, from the griefs that in my bosom swell,
I seem to snatch some taste of bliss again;
Thus, fed by tender joy, my grief shall last:
Unfed, the deepest sorrow soon is past.*

Within a gentle heart love never dies;
He fades in breasts which guilty thoughts distress,
And fails the sooner for his own excess;
But lives, when rich in virtuous qualities.
When the eye sees not and the touch is gone,
And all the pleasures Beauty yields are o'er,
Howe'er the conscious sufferer may deplore,
We know that soon such sensual griefs are flown.
Virtuous and holy love links mind to mind;
And such is ours, which death cannot unbind.

We are astonished at finding the poet, whose boast it was that he had never loved his mistress, Theresa, with a dis-

* Aquelles mans que james perdonaren
Han ja romput lo fill tenint la vida
De vos, qui son de aquest mon exida
Segons los fats en secret ordenaren.
Tot quant yo veig e sent dolor me torna
Dant me recort de vos que tant amava.
En ma dolor, si prim e bes cercava
Si trobara que 'n delit se contorna.
Donchs durara, puix té qui la sosting,
Car sens delit dolor cresch nos retinga.

En cor gentil amor per mort no passa,
Mas en aquell qui sol lo vici tira;
La quantitat d' amor durar no mira,
La qualitat d' amor bona no 's lassa.
Quant l' ull no veu e lo toch no pratica
Mor lo voler que tot por el se guanya
Qui 'n tal punt es dolor sent molt e stranya
Mas dura poch qui 'n passau testifica.
Amor honest los sancts amant fa colre
D' aquest vos am. et mort mol me pot tolre.

honourable passion, expressing doubts as to her salvation, certainly incompatible with that admiration for a beloved object which sanctifies all her acts in our eyes. In one of his elegies, he says:

The heavy grief, which words can never tell,
Of him who dies, and knows not if the hand
Of God will place him on the heavenly strand,
Or bury him beneath the vaults of hell—
Such grief my spirit feels, unknowing what
Of good or ill, God has ordained to thee;
Thy bliss is mine, and mine thy misery:
Whate'er betide thee, still I share thy lot.*

When once the mind is struck with the terrific idea, that salvation or condemnation must depend on the last moments of life, the frightful belief destroys all our trust in virtue; and Ausias March, in the wanderings of his brain, abandoned the mistress, whom he had worshipped as an angel upon earth, to the ministers of celestial vengeance. Sometimes, he seems determined to share her lot, though she should be devoted to eternal torments:

On thee my joy and sorrow both depend,
And with thy lot God wills that mine should blend.†

It is not merely in these melancholy presentiments that the passion of Ausias March assumes a religious cast. On all occasions, it displays a spirit of exalted piety, and acquires, from that circumstance, a more touching character. The death of his beloved friend, far from weakening his attachment, seems only to have superadded to it a nobler feeling of religion.

As when rich gold, fresh gather'd from the mine,
Is mix'd with metals valueless and base,
Till purged within the fire some little space,
The alloy flies off, and leaves it pure and fine;

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* La gran dolor que lengua no pot dir
Del qui s' veu mort e no sab hon ira,
No sab son Deu si per a si l' volra
O si n' infern lo volra sebellir.
Semblant dolor lo meu esperit sent,
No sabent que de vos Deus ha ordenat;
Car vostre mal o be a mi es dat,
Del que havreu, yo n' saré soffirent.

† Goig o tristor per tu he yo complir,
En tu esta quant Deu me volra dar.

So death has banish'd every grosser stain
Which mark'd my passion; and my earthly love
Has changed into such hope of bliss above,
That nothing but the holiest thoughts remain.*

While the poet is reasoning, with apparent coldness and philosophic subtlety, on the circumstance upon which his life depends, his grief sometimes bursts from him with violence and prompts him to the most passionate expressions:

O God! why will not then this bitter draught
Destroy the wretch who saw his mistress die?
How sweet would be my mortal agony,
Remembering her for whom the cup was quaff'd!
Pity! why sleep'st thou, when I waste in grief?
Why break'st thou not the heart which torments sear?
Thou must be powerless, if thou dost not hear,
Or cruel, if thou wilt not grant relief.†

Although the works of many other poets of Valencia are said to have been printed, I have never met with them in a separate form. I am only acquainted with them, as they exist in the ancient Spanish *cancioneri*. We there find specimens of Vicent Ferradis, Miquel Perez, Fenollar, Castelvy, and Vinyoles; and these enable us to perceive that true taste was little cultivated at that period. Ausias March, indeed, appears to have been inspired with real feeling; but the rest courted ingenuity and wit, and often false wit. Of

* Axi com l' or quant de la mena l' trahen
Esta mesclat de altres metalls sutzens,
E mes al foch en fum s' en va la liga
Leyxant l' or pur, no podent se corrompre,
Axi la mort mon voler gros termena;
Aquell fermat, en la part contra sembla
D' aquella, que la mort al mon la tolta,
L' honest voler en mi reman sen mezcla.

† O Deu perque no romp la 'marga fel
Aquell qui veu a son amich perir!
Quant mes puix vols tan dolça mort soffrir,
Gran sabor ha, puix se pren per tal zel.
Tu pietat com dorms en aquell cas?
Quel cor de carn fer esclatar no sals?
No tens poder quen tal temps lo acabs
Qual tant cruel qu' en tal cas not lloas.

this description, is a little poem, which is reprinted in all the *cancioneri*, by Vicent Ferradis, on the name of Jesus, in which, we are told, the deepest piety may be found mingled with the most beautiful poetry. We may judge of this production by the following stanza, which contains an anagram on the letters I. H. S. Jesus Hominum Salvator.

Triumphant name! presenting visibly
The glorious picture of the crucifixion!
Lo; in the midst, the H, which legibly
Points out the God who died 'neath this infliction!
The aspirate marks his nature all divine;
The I and S, the thieves on either hand,
Who with their Saviour do their breath resign;
The stops denote the two, who sadly stand,
John and the Virgin Mary, at the feet
Of the Redeemer, making his death sweet.*

In very few of the productions of the poets of Valencia, do we find any remains of the old simplicity and sensibility. There is, however, something approaching to them, in the following stanza of Mossen Vinyoles.

Where is the day, the moment, and the hour,
Whereon I lost my much-loved liberty?
Where are the snares which so inveigled me?
Where are the ills for which these salt tears shower? †

---

* Nom trihumfal queus presenta visible
Del crucifix la bella circunstancia,
En mig la *h* que nos letra legible
L' inmens ja mort, tractat vilment y orrible.
La title d' alt de divinal sustancia.
La *j* y la *s* los ladres presenten
A les dos parts per fer li companyia,
Y pels costatz dos punts pue s' aposenten,
Denoten clar los dos que l' turment lenten
Del redemptor, Johan y la Maria.

† On es lo jorn, on es lo punt y l'ora
On yo perdy los bens de libertat?
On es lo lac qu' axim me cativat?
On es lo mal per qui ma lengua plora?
On es lo be que m' fa tant desigar?
On es l' engan de tanta conexença
On es lo grat amor y benvolença
Que del pus cert me fa desesperar?

Where is the good I sought with so much pride?
Where is the bond of habit's firm connexion?
Where is the boundless love, the fond affection,
Which made me doubt of every thing beside?

It is almost from a sense of duty that I have selected and translated a few specimens of these amatory poems; passionate feelings, breathing in a forgotten language; tender attachments and fond regrets, confided to the custody of poetry, which posterity regards not. These old Catalonian poems have always seemed to me like inscriptions upon tombs.

Whilst Ausias Mareh is considered, by the Catalans, as the Petrarch of the Provençal language, John Martorell is said to be its Boccacio. It is to him that their light style of prose composition is attributed. To him, it owes its pliancy and nature, and its adaptation to the purpose of graceful narration. His work enjoys, even beyond his own country, a considerable reputation. It is a romance entitled, *Tirante the White*, and it is mentioned by Cervantes, with great praise, in his catalogue of Don Quixote's library, and called by him "a treasure of contentment, a mine of delight, and, with regard to style, the best book in the world." John Martorell appears to have given it to the public about the year 1435, and it was one of the first books which was printed, on the introduction of that art into Spain. The first Catalan edition is that of Valencia, 1480, in folio. It was translated into various languages, and the French version is to be found in almost every library.

It is difficult to separate a work of chivalry, like this, from its class, and to judge of it independently of other compositions of the same kind. Martorell is posterior to many other Romance writers; to the authors of the romances of the *Round Table*, and of those of *Charlemagne*. In *Tirante the White*, we find less of fairy-land, and fewer supernatural wonders, than in its predecessors. The action is more grave, the tenor of the story more consistent; and, although the hero, from the rank of a simple knight, becomes Emperor of Constantinople, we can follow and comprehend his elevation, as well as his achievements. On the other hand, there is, perhaps, less poetry; and fewer instances occur of a brilliant imagination than in the *Amadis*, the *Tristan*, and the

Lancelot. Martorell occupies, in fact, the middle place between the ancient and the modern Romance writers. Other poets and romance writers succeeded him; and the Catalans mention with praise, Mossen Jaume Roig of Valencia, who wrote a long poem on coquetry,* in a very bitter and

* The title of the Poem is "*Libre de les Dones*," the first edition of which is printed at Valencia in 1531, and is very rare. The author was physician to Maria, the Queen of Alonzo the Fifth, and wrote his book, as appears by his own statement, in 1460. Notwithstanding the credit which is given him by the Catholic Ximeno, for the solid doctrine, sacred learning, and piety of this volume, it appears to be written rather in ridicule than admiration of high orthodox faith. It is dedicated to "the miraculous conception," of which he professes himself a most decided votary. The versification is singularly artificial and laconic, and is known by the title of Cudolada. His motto is "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among daughters." Two translations have been made into Spanish. As a specimen of the original we will give part of the concluding chapter, in which he turns the schools into ridicule.

"Peyta recens
mit quatrecens
vint set complits
anys son finits
sens trenta tres
anys les primes
desque naixque
mentres vixque." *p.* 187, *Edit.* 1735.

Works prepar'd
On subjects hard,
Beyond the reach
Of thought or speech,
The subtilties,
The misteries
Of Trinity;
If it could be
Sinless conceived
And so believed.
Predestination
Is faith's temptation.
Then hear Pertuse,
And Lully's muse;
Ocham, Scotus,
What they brought us,
Opinions prime,
And subtle rime,
To please not few,
And profit too,
Is its reward.
And I regard
Preaching like this,
As great a bliss
To hear and see
As e'er could be.
The bright amount.
Of wealth to count
Another claims, &c. &c.[1]

[1] "Grans questions
en los sermons
imperceptibles
no aprensibles
subtilitats
alictats
de Trinitat
si en pecat
fonch concebuda
si fonch scmuda
predestinar
la fe probar

Dits

humorous style; the two Jordi;* Febrer, the historian of Valencia; and, lastly, Vincent Garzias, the rector of Balfogona, who died at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and who was the last poet of Catalonia, or Valencia, who wrote in the Provençal language. The increasing prosperity of the Kings of Aragon was fatal both to the language and to the liberties of their subjects. Ferdinand the Catholic married Isabella of Castile, and that princess, on mounting the throne of Castile, in 1474, virtually divided her crown with her husband. The monarchy of Castile was more powerful than that of Aragon; its capital was more brilliant, and its revenues were more considerable. The courtiers were drawn to Madrid by their interest, and all the nobility of Spain conceived it necessary to learn the language of Castile. Even the Catalans, and the Aragonese, who, for so long a period, had placed the highest value on their language, and who, by a fundamental law, had required, in the reign of James I. (1266, 1276,) that it should be substituted for the Latin in all public proceedings, now abandoned

Dits Den Pertusa[1]
Den Lull[2] la Musa
De Ocham,[3] Scott[4]
Llur vari vot
Coses molt primes
ab subtils rimes
plau à les gens
Profit no gens
ne sol restar.
De tal preycar
à mon parer
es tal plaer
lo scotar
com lo contar
daltri florins
è dels oins
les armonics
è melodies
hanne dellit
quant han oit
lo so es passat
quin serà stat
ni recitar
ni recontar
nou sperèn
sols oireñ
bè han sonat
bè han precat
à mon plaer, &c.

[1] Pertusa—A Valencian nobleman. He wrote a book on the Trinity, Incarnation, and other misteries of faith. [2] Raymond Lully. [3] William Occham or Occam. [4] Duns Scotus.

* [It should be observed, that Mossen Jordi de Sant Jordi, is contended, by the Catalonians, to have flourished as early as the thirteenth century; two centuries before Ausias March, and in the most splendid æra of the Provençal Troubadours. The question turns chiefly on the circumstance of some of his verses coinciding almost literally with part of one of Petrarch's sonnets, and it is yet to be decided who is the original.—See the whole piece, and some further particulars, in the *Retrospective Review*, vol. iv. p. 46.—*Tr.*]

it, and suffered it to perish, from motives of personal aggrandisement. It was from those provinces that, in the reigns of Charles V. and Philip, Boscan and Argensola issued, who caused a revolution in Spanish poetry. But when the Catalans, unable to offer further resistance to the despotic dominion of the House of Austria, and resolving to cast off that odious yoke, delivered themselves up to France, by the treaty of Péronne, they petitioned for the restoration of their ancient and noble language, begging that it alone might be employed in all the acts of government and public transactions. They regretted their language as well as their laws, their liberties, their prosperity, and their ancient virtue, all of which had passed away. The most powerful bond which attaches a people to their manners, their customs, and their sweetest associations, is the language of their fathers. The deepest humiliation to which they can be subjected, is to be compelled to forget it, and to learn a new tongue.

There certainly is, even to a foreigner, something peculiarly melancholy in the decay and destruction of a beautiful language. That of the Troubadours, so long esteemed for its sonorous and harmonious character, which had awakened the enthusiasm, the imagination, and the genius, of so large a portion of Europe, and which had extended itself not only over France, Italy, and Spain, but even to the courts of England, and of Germany, no longer meets the ears of men who are worthy of listening to the sound. It is still spoken in the South of France; but so broken up into dialects, that the people of Gascony, of Provence, and of Languedoc, no longer suspect that they are speaking the same tongue. It is the basis of the Piedmontese; it is spoken in Spain from Figueras to the kingdom of Murcia; and it is the language of Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles. But, in all these various countries, every man of education abandons it for the Castilian, the Italian, or the French; and to speak in the language which boasts of poets, who have been the glory of their country, and to whom we are indebted for modern poetry, is avoided as ridiculous and vulgar.

In finishing our inquiries into the language and the literature of the Troubadours, let us not judge them too severely, on account of the slight impression, and the few brilliant recollections which they leave on our memory. We ought

not to forget, that the age in which they lived was degraded by ignorance, and by almost universal barbarism. It is impossible, in analyzing their works, not to compare them continually with the French poets in the reign of Louis XIV., with the Italians during the age of Leo X., with the English of Queen Anne's time, and with the German poets of the present day. Yet this comparison is certainly unjust. Whilst the Troubadours must decidedly yield to the great masters of our modern literature, they are, nevertheless, much superior to the versifiers of their time in France, Italy, England, and Germany. A fatality seems to have attended their language; destroying the sovereign houses which spoke it, dispersing the nobility who gloried in its use, and ruining the people by ferocious persecutions. The Provençal, abandoned in its native country by those who were best able to cultivate it, at the precise point of time when it was about to add to its poets, historians, critics, and distinguished prose-writers; discountenanced in the territories which had been newly gained from the Arabians, and confined between the proud Castilian and the sea, perished, at last, in the kingdom of Valencia, at the very period when the inhabitants of those provinces, once so free and haughty, were deprived of their liberties. This school of poetry, the only light amid the darkness of universal barbarism, and the bond which, combining noble minds in the cultivation of high sentiments, formed so long the common link of union amongst different nations, has lost, in our eyes, all its charms and its power. We can no longer be deceived by the hopes which it held forth. The songs which seem to contain the germ of so many noble works, and to which that expectation gave so much interest, appear cold and lifeless, when we reflect how unproductive they have been.

NOTE.

In p. 228, is mentioned a warlike song to rouse the persecuted Provençals to resist the plundering invasion which St. Louis was directing against them, under the pretence of a zeal for religion and social order. A friend furnishes us with a translation of this piece, which is now very curious, as shewing the light in which some of his contemporaries viewed the hypocrisy and cruelty of this St. Louis, whose God is, in the year 1823, invoked in support of similar projects.

I'll make a song, shall body forth
My full and free complaint,
To see the heavy hours pass on,
And witness to the feint
Of coward souls, whose vows were made
In falsehood, and are yet unpaid;
Yet, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

Yes! full and ample help for us
Shall come, so trusts my heart;
God fights for us, and these our foes,
The French, must soon depart.
For, on the souls that fear not God,
Soon, soon shall fall the vengeful rod:
Then, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

And hither they believe to come,
(The treacherous, base Crusaders!)
But, ev'n as quickly as they come,
We'll chase those fierce invaders;
Without a shelter, they shall fly
Before our valiant chivalry:
Then, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

And ev'n if Frederic, on the throne
Of powerful Germany,
Submits the cruel ravages
Of Louis' hosts to see;
Yet, in the breast of England's King,
Wrath, deep and vengeful, shall upspring;
Then, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

Not much those meek and holy men,
The traitorous Bishops, mourn,
Though from our hands the sepulchre
Of our dear Lord be torn;
More tender far, their anxious care
For the rich plunder of Belcaire:
But, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

And look at our proud Cardinal,
Whose hours in peace are past;
Look at his splendid dwelling place,
(Pray Heaven it may not last!)
He heeds not, while he lives in state,
What ills on Damietta wait:
But, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

I cannot think that Avignon
Will lose its holy zeal
In this our cause, so ardently
Its citizens can feel.
Then, shame to him who will not bear,
In this our glorious cause, his share!—
And, noble Sirs, we will not fear,
Strong in the hope of succours near.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ROMANCE-WALLON, OR LANGUE D'OIL, AND ON THE ROMANCES OF CHIVALRY.

It is not the design of this work to treat of the language and literature of France. On that subject, many agreeable and profound works have been written, which are in the hands of every one; and it would be an useless task to repeat, in a curtailed and imperfect manner, all that has been said on this subject, with so much justice and liveliness, by Marmontel, La Harpe, and others. The elder period of French literature has, however, something of a foreign character. Our poets, the heirs of the Trouvères, did not accept the inheritance which devolved upon them; and the language of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries sufficiently varies from our own, to render many of the literary remains of that period inaccesible to most of my readers. It is, moreover, almost impossible to speak of the Troubadours, without giving some account of the Trouvères; or to enquire into the origin and progress of the Romance-Provençal, without, at the same time, discoursing of the Romance-Wallon.

It is not necessary to refer so far back as the Celtic, for the first origin of French literature. That language, which had been long forgotten, could have had little influence upon the characters of those, whose ancestors had spoken it. When the Franks conquered Gaul, it is probable that the Celtic was only to be found in some of the districts of Brittany; where, indeed, it has remained to the present day. That mother-tongue, which appears to have been common to France, to Spain, and to the British Isles, has so completely disappeared, that we are no longer able to ascertain its peculiar character. Although it is regarded as the mother of the *Bas-Breton*, of the Gaelic of Scotland, of the Welsh, and of the dialect of Cornwall, yet the analogy which exists between those languages can with difficulty be defined; nor is their common

derivation discoverable. In all the provinces of Gaul, the Latin had taken place of the Celtic, and had become, amongst the people at large, a sort of native tongue. The massacres which accompanied the wars of Julius Cæsar, the subjection of the vanquished, and the ambition of those Gauls who procured the privileges of Roman citizens, all concurred to produce a change in the manners, the spirit, and the language, of the provinces situated between the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine. From that country, accomplished Latin scholars and celebrated teachers of rhetoric and grammar, proceeded; while the people at large acquired a taste for Roman spectacles, and ornamented their principal cities with magnificent theatres. Four hundred and fifty years of submission to the Roman yoke, caused an intimate union between the Gauls and the inhabitants of Italy.

The Franks, who spoke a Northern or German dialect, introduced a new idiom amongst the Gauls. This intermixture soon corrupted the Latin, which suffered still more from ignorance and barbarism; and the Gauls who called themselves Romans, because they imagined they spoke the language of Rome, abandoned all the refinements of syntax for the simplicity and rudeness of a barbarian tongue. In writing, an attempt was still made to keep alive the Latin; but, in conversation, every one gradually yielded to the prevailing habit, and dropped the use of letters and terminations, which were regarded as superfluous. Even at the present day, we exclude, in the pronunciation of the French language, a fourth part of the letters which we use in writing. After the lapse of some time, a distinction was drawn between the language of the Roman subjects and that of the Latin writers; and the Romance language, founded on the first, and the Latin language, perpetuated by the latter, were recognized as distinct. But the former, which occupied several centuries in its formation, had no name as long as the conquerors preserved the use of the German. At the commencement of the second race of monarchs, German was still the language of Charlemagne and his court. That hero spoke, say the historians of the time, the language of his ancestors, *patrium sermonem;* and many French writers have fallen into a strange error, in supposing that the *Francisque* signified the old French. But, whilst the German was employed in conversation, and in martial and

historical poems, Latin was the written language, and the Romance, still in its state of barbarism, was the dialect of the people.

In the reign of Charlemagne, too, the great difference between the language of the common people and the Latin, compelled the church to preach in the vulgar tongue. A council, held at Tours, in 813, directed the bishops to translate their homilies into the two languages of the people, the rustic Romance, and the *Theotisque*, or German. This decree was confirmed by the Council of Arles, in 851. The subjects of Charlemagne were composed of two very different races ; the Germans who inhabited along and beyond the Rhine, and the Walloons, who called themselves Romans, and who alone, of all the people of the South, were under the dominion of the Franks. The name of *Waelchs*, or Walloons, which was given them by the Germans, was the same as that of *Galli* or *Galatai*, which they received from the Latins and Greeks, and of *Keltai*, or Celts, the name which, according to Cæsar, they themselves acknowledged.* The language which they spoke, was called after them the *Romance-Wallon*, or rustic Romance ; and it was pretty much the same throughout all France, except that, as it extended southward, a nearer approach to the Latin was perceptible ; whilst, on the North, the German prevailed. In the partition, made in 842, amongst the children of Louis the Debonnaire, the common language was made use of, for the first time, in a public proceeding, as the people were a party to the transaction in taking the oath of allegiance to the King. The oath of Charles the Bald, and that of his subjects, are two of the most ancient remaining monuments of the Romance language. The language employed in them resembles the Provençal as much as that which was afterwards called the Romance-Wallon.

The coronation of Bozon, King of Arles, in 879, divided France into two portions, which continued rival and independent states, during four centuries. These provinces seemed destined to be constantly inhabited by different races of men.

* All these names differed only in the pronunciation ; but the Bas-Bretons, a remnant of the Celts, preserved in their language another celebrated name, of a different origin, and which was, perhaps, with them, an honourable title. They called themselves *Cimbri*.

Cæsar has remarked, that in his time the Aquitani differed from the Celtæ in language, manners, and laws. In the country of the former, the Visigoths and the Burgundians established themselves, and the Franks, in the territories of the latter ; while the division of the two monarchies, which took place at the end of the Carlovingian race, only, perhaps, confirmed the ancient distinction between the people. Their language, though formed from the same elements, grew every day more dissimilar. The people of the South called themselves *Romans-provençaux;* while the northern tribes added to the name of Romans, which they had assumed, that of *Waelchs,* or Wallons, which they had received from the neighbouring people. The Provençal was called the Langue d'Oc, and the Wallon the Langue d'Oil, or d'Oui, from the affirmative word of each language, as the Italian was then called the *Langue de si,* and the German the *Langue de ya.*

Normandy, a province of France, was invaded, in the tenth century, by a new northern tribe, who, under the command of Rollo, or Raoul, the Dane, incorporated themselves with the ancient inhabitants. This mixture introduced into the Romance new German words and idioms. Yet the active spirit which led the conquerors to this province, their good laws, their wise administration, and their adoption of the language of the conquered, were the means of giving the Romance-Wallon, a more fixed form, and a greater polish, in Normandy, than in any other province of France. Rollo acquired the Dukedom in 912 ; and a century and a half later, one of his descendants, William the Conqueror, was himself so much attached to the Romance-Wallon, and encouraged it so greatly amongst his subjects, that he introduced it into England, and forced it upon the people by rigorous enactments, instead of their ancient language, which nearly resembled that of his own ancestors.

It was from Normandy that the first writers and the first poets in the French language sprung. The laws which William the Conqueror, who died in 1087, imposed upon his English subjects, are the most ancient work in the Romance-Wallon which has come down to us. After this legal memorial, the two first literary works, which prove that the Langue d'Oui was beginning to be cultivated, are the *Book of the Britons,* or *Brutus,* a fabulous history of the Kings of England, written

in verse, in 1155, and the Romance of the *Knight of the Lion*, written at the same period, both of them in Normandy, or at least by Normans.* *Le Rou des Normands*, or *Le Livre de Raoul*, composed by Gasse in 1160, and which gives a history of the establishment of that people in Normandy, must be placed in the third rank. The period was not now far distant, when the romances of chivalry were to make their appearance in the same language. The first of these was *Tristan de Léonois*, written in prose, about the year 1190. A few years afterwards appeared the romances of *Saint Gréaal* and *Lancelot;* and these, likewise, proceeded either from Normandy, or from the court of England. Before the year 1200, an anonymous translation of the Life of Charlemagne was made; and previously to 1213, Geoffrey de Villehardouin had written, in the French language, a History of the Conquest of Constantinople.

Amongst the different works which appeared at this period, the poem of *Alexander* is that which has enjoyed the greatest share of reputation. It was, probably, given to the world about the year 1210, in the reign of Philip Augustus; as there are many flattering allusions to incidents which occurred at the court of that prince. It is not the work of one individual only, but contains a series of romances and mar-

* There are many copies of the Romance of Brutus. That which I have examined is in the Royal Library. It commences with the following lines:

Qui velt oïr, qui velt savoir
De roi en roi et d'hoir en hoir
Qui cil furent, et dont ils vinrent
Qui Engleterre primes tinrent,
Queus rois y a en ordre eu
Qui ainçois et qui puis y fu,
Maistre Gasse l'a translaté
Qui en conte la vérité,
Si que li livres la devisent.

The romancer takes up his history sufficiently early. He thus begins:

Por la veniance de Paris
Qui de Gresse ravit Hélène.

In these and the subsequent extracts I have not confined myself scrupulously to the ancient orthography. Although it may be essential to the study of the language, it is not so to an acquaintance with the spirit of the ancient poetry. By changing a few letters, I have probably saved the reader much useless difficulty.

vellous histories, which are said to be the result of the labours of nine celebrated poets of the time. Those best known at the present day are, Lambert li Cors, or the Little; Alexander de Bernay, who continued Lambert; and Thomas of Kent. Alexander, perhaps the only hero of Greece, who was known in the middle ages, is introduced, not surrounded by the pomp of antiquity, but by the splendours of chivalry. Of the different parts of this poem, one is called *Li Roumans de tote Chevalerie*, because Alexander is represented in it, as the greatest and noblest of cavaliers. Another bears the title of *Le Vœu du Paon*, or The Vow of the Peacock, from its containing a description of the taking of the oath of chivalry, as it was practised at the court of the Macedonian hero. The high renown of this poem, which was universally read, and translated into several languages, has given the name of Alexandrine verse to the measure in which it is written; a measure, which the French have denominated the heroic.*

Thus, in the twelfth century, the Romance-Wallon became a literary language, subsequent, by at least a hundred years, to the Romance-provençal. The wars against the Albigenses, which at this period caused an intercourse between the two nations into which France was divided, contributed probably to inspire a taste for poetry in that province, which was the most tardy in emerging from a state of barbarism, and which could boast, only towards the year 1220, a poetical literature consisting of lyrical pieces, of songs, virelays,

* The poems mentioned above are written in verses of eight syllables, rhymed two and two, and preserving the distinction of masculine and feminine verses, but without regarding the rule, which the French poets of the present day observe, of using them alternately. Nearly all the Fabliaux are written in the same measure. The Alexandrine of twelve syllables, with the cæsura in the middle, divides itself generally, to the ear, into two lines of equal length. Formerly it was even more monotonous and laboured than at present, for the poets used frequently to leave a mute syllable in the middle of the verse, at the end of the cæsura. The Italians, in their Leonine verses, and the Spanish, in their verses *de arte mayor*, have the same monotonous defect. It may be observed in the commencement of the poem of *Alexander*.

> Qui vers de riche estoire veut entendre et oïr,
> Pour prendre bon exemple de prouesse cueillir,
> La vie d'Alexandre, si com je l'ai trovée
> En plusieurs leus écrite et de boche contée . . . . &c.

ballads, and *sirventes*. The reciters of tales, and the poets, giving the name of Troubadour a French termination, called themselves Trouvères.*

With the exception of the difference of language, it may be thought that the Troubadour and the Trouvère, whose merit was pretty nearly equal; who were equally ignorant or well-informed; who both of them spent their lives at courts, at which they composed their poems, and where they mingled with knights and ladies; and who were both accompanied by their Jongleurs and minstrels, should have preserved the same resemblance in their productions. Nothing, however, can be more dissimilar than their poems. All that remains of the poetry of the Troubadours is of a lyrical character, while that of the Trouvères is decidedly epic. The Provençals, it is true, have appealed against the judgment which has been passed upon their poets, to whom the partizans of the Trouvères have denied all the merit of invention. The former maintain,† that it is evident that this charge is false, from the long catalogue of the tales, romances, and fables, with which it was the duty of the Jongleurs to be acquainted, in order to entertain the great, and which have since either been lost or are preserved in the Langue d'Oil. They further insist, that amongst the poems of the Trouvères, many are to be found of Provençal origin, which appears from the scene being laid in Provence; and they maintain that the Trouvères contented themselves with translating the romances and *fabliaux*, of which they were not the inventors. It seems, however, exceedingly unaccountable, that the *songs* only of the Provençals, and the *tales* of the French, should have been preserved, if the genius of the two nations, in this respect, were not essentially distinct.‡

* We have elsewhere remarked, that in Provençal, *Trobaire* is the nominative of Troubadors.

† Among others, in the "*Conseils au Jongleur*" those of Giraud de Calanson, of which we have given an extract, and which are referred to the year 1210.—Vide Pappon, *Lettres sur les Troubadours*, p. 225 à 227.

‡ [This must be taken with much qualification. A mere reference to the pages of Laborde's Essay on Music, will show that there are yet remaining, in manuscript, an immense number of lyric pieces of the northern school. It is hardly safe to found any very positive opinions on the absence of tales and romances from the manuscript collections of

The biography of the Troubadours has been frequently given to the public. The lives which were published by Nostradamus, and the accounts collected by M. de Sainte-Palaye, and afterwards made known to the public by Millot, are, for the most part, highly romantic. They contain the history of their intrigues with noble ladies, of their sufferings, and of their chivalric achievements. The lives of the Trouvères are much more obscure. Scarcely have the names of any survived, nor is the history of the most celebrated individuals known. If a few anecdotes have been preserved, they possess little either of interest or of adventure.

The Trouvères have left us many romances of chivalry, and *fabliaux;* and upon the former, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries must rest their claims to glory. The spirit of chivalry, which burst forth in these romances ; the heroism of honour and love ; the devotion of the powerful to the weak ; the noble purity of character, triumphing over all opposition, which is held forth as a model in these works ; and the supernatural fictions, so novel and so dissimilar to everything which either antiquity or later times had produced, display a force and a brilliancy of imagination, which, as nothing had prepared the way for them, seem quite inexplicable.

After searching, on all sides, for the inventors of that chivalric spirit which burns in the romances of the middle ages, we are astonished to observe how sudden was that burst of genius. We in vain attempt to discover, in the manners or in the traditions of the Germans, the birth of chivalry. That people, although they respected women and admitted them to their counsels and their worship, had still more deference than tenderness for the sex. Gallantry was unknown to them ; and their brave, loyal, but rude manners, could never have contributed to the development of the

the Troubadours yet preserved to us. It had often been a subject of wonder, that, notwithstanding the prevalence of Troubadour poetry in Catalonia, no remains of it were known to be preserved there. Yet a recent visit to the archives of its churches, has shown that an immense quantity is yet in existence, though unpublished. Had it not been for the literary zeal of one individual (Mr. Edgar Taylor, in his work, called, *Lays of the Minnesingers, or German Troubadours*), the historian might now have asserted, without fear of contradiction that the *Minnesingers* wrote no lyrical poetry.—*Tr.*]

sentiment and heroism of chivalry. Their imagination was gloomy, and their supernatural world was peopled with malicious beings. The most ancient poem of Germany, that of the Niebelungen, in the form in which we at present find it, is posterior to the first French romances, and may have been modified by them. But the manners it describes are not those of chivalry. Love acts no part in it; for the warriors are actuated by far different interests and far different passions from that of gallantry. Women are seldom introduced, and then not as objects of devotion; while the men are not softened down and civilized by their union with them. The inventors of the romances of chivalry, on the contrary, have united in painting their heroes, as endowed with the most brilliant qualities of all the nations with which they had come in contact; with the fidelity of the Germans, the gallantry of the French, and the rich imagination of the Arabians.

It is to the last source, according to others, that we are to look for the primary origin of the romance of chivalry. At the first view, this opinion appears to be natural, and to be supported by many facts. Some very ancient romances represent the system of chivalry as having been established amongst the Moors, as well as amongst the Christians, and introduce Moorish knights; whilst all the reciters of tales, the historians, and the poets of Spain, represent the manners of the Moors as those of chivalry. Thus Ferragus, Ferraù, or Fier-à-bras, the bravest and the most loyal of the Moorish knights, figures in the Chronicle of Turpin, which preceded all the romances of chivalry. The same chronicle affirms, that Charlemagne was dubbed a knight by Galafron, Emir (Admirantus,) or Saracen prince of Coleto, in Provence. So, Bernard Carpio, the most ancient hero of Christian Spain, signalized himself, chiefly in the Moorish army, by his chivalrous deeds. The History of the civil wars of Grenada is a chivalric romance; and, in the Diana of Montemayor, the only chivalric adventure which is contained in that pastoral composition, is laid amongst the Moors. It is the history of Abindarraes, one of the Abencerrages of Grenada, and the beautiful Xarifa. The ancient Spanish romances, and their oldest poem, the Cid, attribute the same manners to the Arabians, as early as the twelfth century. All that per-

tion of Spain, which was occupied by the Moors, was covered with strong castles, built on all the heights ; and every petty prince, every lord, and even every *chiek*, exercised an independent power. There certainly existed in Spain, at least, a sort of Arabian feudalism, and a spirit of liberty, very different from that of Islamism. The notions on the point of honour, which not only possessed a great influence over the system of chivalry, but even over our modern manners, rather belonged to the Arabians than to the German tribes. To them, we owe that spirit of vengeance which has been so religiously observed, and that fastidious sensibility to insults and affronts, which has induced men to sacrifice not only their own lives but those of their families, to wash out a stain upon their honour ; and which produced the revolt of the Alpuxarra of Grenada in the year 1568, and the destruction of fifty thousand Moors, to avenge a blow given by D. Juan de Mendoza to D. Juan de Malec, the descendant of the Aben-Humeyas.

Devotion to the female sex appears to be still peculiar to those nations, whose blood has felt the ardent influence of a burning sun. They love with a passion and an excess, of which neither our ordinary life nor even our romances present any idea. They regard the habitations of their wives as a sanctuary, and a reflection upon them as a blasphemy. The honour of a man is deposited in the hands of her whom he loves. The period, when chivalry took its rise, is precisely that, when the moral feelings of the Arabians attained their highest pitch of delicacy and refinement. Virtue was then the object of their enthusiasm ; and the purity of the language, and of the ideas of their authors, ought to make us ashamed of the corruption of our own. As a further proof, of all the nations of Europe, the Spanish are the most chivalric ; and they alone were the immediate scholars of the Arabians.

But, if chivalry be of Arabic origin, whence comes it, that we have so few traces of it in their writings ? Whence comes it, that we are not indebted to the Spanish and the Provençals, for our first romances ? and how does it happen, that the scene, in the earliest works of that kind, is laid in France or England ; countries, over which the Arabians had, certainly, never any influence ?

The romances of chivalry are divided into three distinct classes. They relate to three different epochs, in the early part of the middle ages; and they represent three communities, three bands of fabulous heroes, who never had communication with each other. The origin and peculiar character of these three romantic mythologies, may, perhaps, throw considerable light on the first invention of chivalry.

In the romances of chivalry of the first class, the exploits of Arthur, son of Pendragon, the last British king who defended England against the invasions of the Anglo-Saxons, are celebrated. At the court of this king and his wife Genevra, we find the enchanter, Merlin; and to it belonged the institution of the Round Table, and the knights, Sir Tristan of Leonois,* Lancelot of the Lake, and many others. The origin of this history may be traced in the Romance of Brutus, by Gasse, the text of which contains the date of 1155. In this fabulous chronicle, both King Arthur, and the Round Table, and the prophet Merlin, are to be found.† But it was the later romances which perfected this idea, and peopled the court of King Arthur with living beings, who were then as well known as the courtiers of Louis XIV. are to us. The Romance of Merlin, who was said to be the son of the devil and a Breton lady, who lived in the reign of

* [The Lyonnese, a part of Cornwall, no longer visible above water.—*Tr.*]

† The author of the Romance of Brutus, who grounds himself upon the authority of more ancient histories, or rather versifies all kinds of traditions, and every historical and poetical rumour which was afloat at the time, represents Arthur and his twelve peers as treating with the Emperor of the Romans:

Artus fut assis à un dois,
Environ lui contes et rois,
Et sont doze hommes blancs venus,
Bien atornés et bien vestus,
Deux et deux en ces palais vindrent
Et deux et deux les mains se tindrent,
Douze estoient, et douze Romains;
D'olive portent en lors mains,
Petit pas ordinairement,
Et vindrent moult avenamment.
Parmi la sale trespassèrent,
Al roi vindrent; le saluèrent,
De Rome, se disant, venoient, etc.

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Vortiger, makes us acquainted with the wars of Uther and Pendragon against the Saxons, the birth and youth of Arthur, the miracles with which the prophet of chivalry sanctified the establishment of the Round Table, and the prophecies which he left behind him, and to which all the subsequent Romance writers have had recourse. The Romance of Saint-Gréaal, which is written in verse, by Christian de Troyes, in the twelfth century, is a mixture of Breton chivalry and sacred history. The cup out of which the Messiah drank, during his crucifixion, was known to the Romance writers under the name of Saint Gréaal. They suppose it to have been carried into England, where it came into the possession of the knights of the Round Table, Lancelot of the Lake, Galaar, his son, Percival of Wales, and Boort, of whom the history of each is given.* King Arthur, Gawain his nephew,

* The original Romance of Saint-Gréaal may be found in the Royal Library, No. 7523. It is a very large manuscript volume, in 4to., written in double columns, and containing nearly the whole history of the Knights of the Round Table. It was afterwards translated into prose, and printed *lit. Goth. Paris*, 1516, *fo.* Christian de Troyes, who originally composed it in verse, may fairly be ranked amongst the best poets of the earlier ages of his language. There is both harmony in the verses, and sensibility in the narrative. At the commencement of the Romanee, we find a mother, who, after having lost her husband and her two elder sons in battle, attempting to prevent her third child from taking up arms, and entering npon the career of glory, detains him in a solitary castle, never allowing him to hear even the name of knight. The young gentleman, however, during one of his visits to the neighbouring peasantry, accidentally meets with some ladies and knights-errant, and is immediately seized with a love of adventurc. Afte1 making his mother repeat to him the history of his family, he instantly sets off to beg the honour of knighthood from the king.

Biaux fils, fait elle, diex vos doint
Joie ; plus que ne m'en remaint,
Vous doint-il où que vous aillez. . . . .
Quand li varlet fut eloigné,
Le giet d' une pierre menue
Se regarda, et vit chaüe
Sa mère, au ehief du pont arrière,
Et fut pasmée en tel manière
Comme s' el fut pasmée morte.

In another celebrated Romance, by the same Christian de Troyes, the author, with vast simplicity, delivers his opinion, that France had arrived at that period of glory and science which so greatly distinguished Rome and Greeee. The passage is to be found at the

Perlevaux, nephew of King Pecheur, Meliot de Logres, and Meliaus of Denmark, are the heroes of this illustrious court. whose adventures are recounted by different Romance writers, with a curious mixture of simplicity, grandeur, gallantry and superstition. The Romance of Lancelot of the Lake was commenced by Christian de Troyes, but continued, after his death, by Godfrey de Ligny. The Romance of Tristan, son of King Meliadus of Leonois, the first which was written in prose, and which is most frequently cited by ancient authors, was written in 1190, by a Trouvère whose name is forgotten.*

When we examine this numerous family of heroes, and the scenes in which their achievements are laid, we feel confirmed in the opinion that the Normans are the real inventors of this new school of poetry. Of all the people of ancient Europe, the Normans shewed themselves, during the period which preceded the rise of the Romance literature, to be the most adventurous and intrepid. Their incursions, from Denmark and Norway, on the coasts of France and England, in open vessels, in which they traversed the most dangerous seas, and sailing up the rivers, surprised nations in the midst of peace, who were not even aware of their existence, astonish and confound the imagination, by the audacity which they dis-

commencement of the Romance of Alexander, the descendant of King Arthur. *Biblioth. manusc.* 7498. 3.

Ce nos ont nos livres appris
Que Grèce eut de chevalerie
Le premier loz, et de clergie (*savoir*)
Puis vint chevalerie à Rome
Et ja de clergie la some,
Qui ore est en France venue,
Dieu doint qu'elle y soit retenue
Et que li leus li abellisse,
Tant que ja de France ne isse
L'onor qui s'y est arrêtée,
Dont elle est prisée et dotée
Mieux des Gréjois et des Romains.

* In the edition of Paris, 1533, in small folio, the first chapter thus commences : "Je Luce chevalier, seigneur du chasteau du Gast, voysin prochain de Salesbiere en Angleterre, ay voulu rediger et mettre en volume l'histoire autentique des vertueux, nobles et glorieux fait du très-vaillant et renommé chevalier Tristan, fils du puyssant roy Meliadus de Leonnoys." The Chevalier Luce, however, is a new editor, and not the original author.

play. Other tribes of Normans, passing through the wild deserts of Russia, sword in hand, and cutting their way through a perfidious and sanguinary nation, arrived at Constantinople, where they became the guards of the Emperor. They purchased, with their blood, the luxurious fruits of the South ; and, even at the present day, "the love of figs" is a phrase in Iceland, signifying the most vehement appetite ; an appetite which impelled their forefathers to the wildest adventures. Others of the Normans established themselves in Russia ; and their unconquerable bravery, seconded by the natives, soon rendered them exceedingly powerful. They there founded the dynasty of the Warags or the Warangians, which lasted until the invasion of the Tartars. A powerful colony of Normans, who established themselves in France, and gave their own name to Neustria, adopted the language and the laws of the people, in the midst of whom they lived ; without, however, abandoning their taste for foreign incursions. The conquests of these Normans astonish us by their hardihood, and by the adventurous spirit which seems to have actuated every individual. At the commencement of the eleventh century, a few pilgrim adventurers, who were drawn by devotion and curiosity into the kingdom of Naples, successively conquered La Puglia, Calabria, and Sicily. Scarcely fifty years had elapsed from the period when the Normans first discovered the way to these distant lands, when Robert Guiscard beheld, in the same year, the Emperors of the East and the West flying before him. In the middle of the eleventh century, a Duke of Normandy conquered England ; and at the commencement of the next century, Boemond, another Norman, founded the principality of Antioch. The adventurers of the North were thus established in the centre of Syria.

A people so active, so enterprising, and so intrepid, found no other delight in their leisure hours, than listening to tales of adventures, dangers and battles. Their ungovernable imaginations were dissatisfied, unless they were engaged in a game of hazard, at which the stakes were human lives. Nothing delighted them so much as to see some hero wandering alone, combating alone, and gaining the victory by his single arm, as William Bras-de-fer, Osmond, Robert, Roger and Boemond had done, at a period which was then recent

Courage was valued by them, above every other quality. The other chivalric virtues were held in little estimation ; and the nation, whose great hero had assumed the surname of Guiscard (the cunning, or the thief), by no means punished treachery with the same severity as cowardice. Thus, in the romance of Lancelot, it is said that "his father had a neighbour, who lived near him in the county of Berry, then called the Desert. This neighbour's name was Claudas, and he was lord of Bourges and the adjacent country. Claudas was a king, chivalric and wise, but wonderfully treacherous."* Love, which is to be found in the poetry of every nation, formed a part of their narratives. But it was not love, with that mixture of constancy, purity, and delicacy which the Spanish Romance writers have thrown around it ; and which, when awakened amongst the nations of the South, is the most tender and ardent of all passions. Nor was the supernatural world represented with that beauty, which, from a better acquaintance with the fictions of the South, distinguishes the later romances. There were none of those genii, who dispensed, at will, all the wonders of art and nature ; who created enchanted palaces at their beck, while every thing that can dazzle or charm the senses, started up at the word of a magician. They had only a kind of fays, powerful, yet dependant beings, who influenced the destinies of men, and yet had themselves, occasionally, need of human protection. Their existence had been an article in the creed of all the northern nations, even during the reign of paganism. The priestesses of the sombre divinities of the woods were then their interpreters and their organs. Christianity had not as yet taught the Normans to disbelieve in the existence of these beings. It merely attributed to them another origin. The ancient worship was considered as a magical art ; and the powers, attributed to the fays, were a modification of those possessed by the devil. "At this time,"† says the author of the romance

* Lancelot of the Lake, p. 1, chap. 1. Paris, 1533, 3 vols fol. *lit Goth*

† "En celui temps, étoient appelées fées toutes celles qui s'entremettoient d'enchantemens et de charmes; et moult en estoit pour lors, principalement en la Grande-Bretaigne ; et savoient la force et la vertu des paroles, des pierres, des herbes, parquoi elles estoient tenues en jeunesse, en beauté et en grandes richesses : celle-ci avoit appris tout ce qu'elle savoit de nygromancie de Merlin le prophète aux Anglois, qui

of Lancelot, "all those were called *fays*, who dealt in enchantments and charms; and there were many of them, principally in Great Britain. They knew the power and virtue of words, and of stones, and of herbs, whereby they preserved themselves in youth and beauty, and got great riches. They learned all the necromancy of Merlin, the English prophet, who possessed all the wisdom that the devil can bestow. The said Merlin was a man engendered between a woman and the devil, and he was called the fatherless child."

The heroes of chivalry were never tired of roaming through France, Brittany, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Many kingdoms are named; and the kings of Logres, of Léonois, of Cornwall, and twenty other places, are introduced; but all their territories might be comprised within a very small circle.

The provinces of France, whither the scene is often transported, are generally those which, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, belonged to the English, or which were well known to that people. We meet with no knightly adventures in that portion of France where the Langue d'Oc was spoken, nor in the countries beyond Paris. Sometimes the Romans are obscurely mentioned, as if that nation still existed; but the knights never passed into Italy, nor do any of the chivalry of that country ever make their appearance amongst them.* Neither Spain nor the Moors are mentioned, nor is any notice taken of Germany and the inland countries of the North. The most perfect ignorance, indeed, of every other part of the world, is manifested. In addition to their native country,

sçut toute la sapience qui des diables peut descendre. Or fut le dit Merlin ung homme engendré en femme par ung diable, et fut appelé l'enfant sans père." Part I. fol. 6.

* "Durant ce temps estoient le roy de Cornouailles et celui de Leonnois subjects au roi de Gaule. Cornouailles rendoit au roy de Gaul cent jouvenceaux et cent damoyselles, et cent chevaux de prix, et le roy de Leonnois autant. Et tenoit le roy de Gaule de la seigneurie de Rome. Et sachez que alors rendoient tribut à Rome toutes les terres du monde. N'en Gaule n'avoit encore nul chrétien, ains estoient tous payens. Le roy que adoneques estoit en Gaule, estoit Maronéus (no doubt, Marovéus), que moult estoit prud'homme de sa loi. Et après sa mort, vint saint Remy en France, que convertit Clovis à la loi chrétienne." (*Tristan de Leonnois*, fol. 5.) This passage is copied from the edition of Paris, 1533; but the oldest editions are modern when compared with the manuscripts, and bear evident traces of more recent times. It is only in the manuscripts of the Royal Library, that we find the unmixed and genuine picture of the twelfth century.

the Romance writers appear to have been only acquainted with the places mentioned in Scripture. Joseph of Arimathea passes, without any difficulty, from Judæa to Ireland ; and the kingdom of Babylon, the native country of the mother of Tristan de Léonois, is represented to have bordered upon Brittany. The countries within which the Norman Romance writers confined themselves, did not exist at the period when they wrote, and, at no time, resembled the picture which is there given. The gross chronological errors which they committed, prevent our referring their fables to any one period of history ; and the political state which they describe, in all probability, never had any existence. In their fictions, they yet appear to have proceeded upon some fixed notions ; for the geography of their romances is not altogether so confused and fantastic as that of Ariosto. The wanderings of their heroes are not absolutely impossible, and might, perhaps, be traced upon the map ; unlike those of Orlando, of Rinaldo, and of Astolpho. The political state and the independence of the little princes of Armorica, had some foundation in history. A confused account is preserved of a league amongst the people of Armorica, for their common defence against the barbarians, at the period of the fall of the Western Empire, which coincides with the reign of Arthur, and the expiring efforts of the Britons to repel the Saxons.*

The scene in which these romances are always laid, appears to leave little doubt as to their Norman origin. It may, perhaps, be asked why the Normans have always chosen foreigners for their heroes ? and why, if they were the inventors of the romances of chivalry, they have not attached themselves to the real chivalric achievements of their own leaders ? We have, however, seen that such an attempt was made, and that the *Rou*, or *Raoul*, of the Normans, was written at the same

* The league of Armorica, or the maritime countries situated between the mouth of the Seine and of the Loire, was entered into, in the disastrous reign of Honorius, about 420, and continued until the subjection of those provinces by Clovis, posterior to the year 497. The long contests between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons, for the possession of England, lasted from 455 to 582. Arthur, Prince of the Silures, who was elected king by the British, appears to have succeeded Vortimer and Vortigern, who long led the British armies to victory. His reign must therefore be placed about the end of the fifth century ; and, if he ever lived at all, he must have been the contemporary of Clovis.

period as the romance of *Brutus*, with the intention of exalting the fame of the founder of the Duchy of Normandy, and of his ancestors and companions in arms. We may conclude that this romance did not display much talent. It made little impression, and the attempt was never imitated. But, when the romances of Saint Gréaal, of Merlin, of Tristan de Léonois, and of Lancelot of the Lake, appeared, they furnished models for all subsequent writers. The characters were ready formed to their hands, and all that remained for them to do, was to vary the adventures. It is possible, too, that the Normans, who were enemies of the conquered Saxons, regarded themselves as the avengers of the vanquished Britons, whose glory they thus wished to re-establish.

In the second class of chivalric romances, we find the Amadises; but whether these romances belong to French literature has been reasonably disputed. The scene is placed nearly in the same countries as in the romances of the Round Table; in Scotland, England, Brittany, and France. But the exact spots are less decidedly marked, and there is a want of locality about them; while the names are generally borrowed from prior romances. The times are absolutely fabulous. The reigns of Perion, king of France, of Languines, king of Scotland, and of Lisvard, king of Brittany, correspond with no period of history; nor do the adventures of the Amadises refer to any revolution, or great public event. Amadis of Gaul, the first of these romances, and the model of all the rest, is claimed, by the people to the south of the Pyrenees, as the work of Vasco Lobeira, a Portuguese, who lived between 1290 and 1325. If, indeed, this be the production of a Portuguese, it is remarkable that he has laid the scene in France, precisely in the same country which the romances of the Round Table have selected; that he has never led his hero into Spain, nor introduced any adventures with the Moors, the contests with whom possessed the highest interest for every Spaniard; and, lastly, that he should only differ from his predecessors in his superior delicacy and tenderness, and in a somewhat greater mysticism upon the topic of love. If, on the contrary, as the French contend, Amadis of Gaul was only worked up, by Lobeira, from a French romance of still higher antiquity, it is strange that the latter should have had no connexion with the romances of the Round Table, and

that it should display a new set of characters, and a totally different fable.*

No doubt exists with regard to the continuations, and the numerous imitations of the Amadis of Gaul. All these romances, as the Amadis of Greece, and the others of that name, Florismart of Hircania, Galaor, Florestan, and Esplandian, are incontestably of Spanish origin, the character of which they bear. Oriental ornaments supersede the ancient simplicity of style ; the imagination is extravagant, and yet weak ; love is refined away ; valour is changed into rhodomontade ; religion assumes a more conspicuous place, and the persecuting spirit of fanaticism begins to display itself. These works were in their highest repute, at the time when Cervantes produced his inimitable Don Quixote ; and, when we arrive at that epoch of Spanish literature, we shall again refer to them.

The third class of chivalric romances is entirely French, although their celebrity is chiefly due to the renowned Italian poet, who availed himself of their fictions. The court of Charlemagne and his Paladins are the subjects of these romances. The history of that monarch, the most brilliant of all during the middle ages, excited the astonishment and admiration of subsequent times. His long reign, his prodigious activity, his splendid victories, his wars with the Saracens, the Saxons, and the Lombards, his influence in Germany, Italy, and Spain, and the re-establishment of the empire of the West, rendered his name popular throughout Europe, long after the achievements, by which he had signalized himself, were forgotten. He was a brilliant star in that dark firmament ; the true hero of chivalry, to whom a thousand fantastic adventures might be ascribed.

It is difficult to fix the precise period of these fables. The most ancient monument of the marvellous history of Charlemagne, is the pseudonymous Chronicle of Turpin, or Tilpin, Archbishop of Rheims. It is universally admitted, that the

* I have merely looked at the Spanish Amadis, printed at Seville, in 1547, in folio, and the French Amadis, translated by Nicholas de Herberay from the Spanish, folio, 1540. We must look amongst the Manuscripts, both for the original of this romance in French verse, and for the genuine work of Vasco Lobeira, which we scarcely recognise in the Spanish editions of the sixteenth century.

.ame of this prelate, who is supposed to be contemporary with Charlemagne, is fictitious ; and some writers have dated this imposture as far back as the tenth century.* As the Chronicle is written in Latin, the greater or less purity of the language does not enable us to distinguish the period of its composition. The most ancient manuscripts, preserved in the Royal and Vatican libraries, appear to be of the eleventh or twelfth centuries. The translations, imitations, and continuations, commenced only in the reign of Philip Augustus, whom his courtiers wished to flatter, by comparing him to Charlemagne.

But, it is by internal evidence, that we must endeavour to ascertain the age of this fabulous chronicle, which bears, no doubt, the impress of the times in which it was written. The most striking characteristic of this romance, and indeed of all the others to which it has given birth, is the enthusiastic feeling which it displays with regard to the holy wars, of which we observe no traces in the romances of the Round Table. But, what is scarcely less remarkable, is the frequent mention of the wars and the Moors of Spain, and of every thing Spanish, which is not at all in accordance with the spirit of the first crusade, and which has given rise to conjectures that this work was the production of a monk of Barcelona. The Chronicle of Archbishop Turpin contains only the history of Charlemagne's last expedition into Spain, whither he was miraculously invited by St. James, bishop of Galicia ; his victories over the Moorish king, Argoland ; the single combats of Orlando and Ferragus ; the death of Orlando at Roncevalles, and the revenge of Charlemagne. Almost all the heroes, who afterwards made so splendid a

* I have some doubts with regard to this. In the introduction, Turpin says, that his friend Leoprand, to whom his book is addressed, was unable to find all the details he wanted, respecting Charlemagne, in the Chronicle of St. Denis. The book is, therefore, posterior to that work, which is thought to have been commenced in the reign of Louis VII. In the 18th chapter it is said, that Charlemagne gave *Portugal* to the Danes and Flemish ; *terrem Portugallorum Danis et Flandris.* But that name is only of equal date with the monarchy, in the twelfth century. The Chronicle of Turpin is divided into thirty-two chapters, and only occupies twenty-five folio pages, in the edition of Echardt. *Germanicarum rerum celebriores vetustioresque Chronographi,* 1 vol. fol. Francf. 1566.

figure in Ariosto, are named and described in this romance from which subsequent writers have borrowed the outline of their fables.

If it be true that manuscripts of the Chronicle of Turpin are in existence, written in the eleventh century, I should confidently refer its composition to the time when Alfonso VI. king of Castile and Leon, conquered Toledo and New Castile, in 1085. He was accompanied on this expedition by numbers of French knights, who passed the Pyrenees for the sake of combating the infidels, under the banners of so great a king, and of beholding the Cid, the hero of the age. The war against the Moors of Spain originated in a very different sort of religious zeal, from that which, twelve years later, lighted up the flame of the first crusade. The object of the former was, to succour Christian brethren and neighbours, who adored the same God and avenged common injuries, of which the author seems to be unwilling that the remembrance should perish. But the design of the crusade was to deliver the Holy Sepulchre, to recover the inheritance of the Messiah, and to succour God rather than man; as a Troubadour, whom we have already cited, expresses himself. This zeal for the Holy Sepulchre, and this enthusiastic devotion directed to the East, are not to be found in the Chronicle of Archbishop Turpin, which is, nevertheless, full of ardent fanaticism, and loaded with miracles.

If this Chronicle, to which Ariosto is so fond of alluding, and which has received from him its poetical celebrity, be anterior to the first romances of the Round Table, yet the romances of the court of Charlemagne, which are imitations of the former, are decidedly of a later date. The Chronicle of Turpin, however fabulous it may be, can scarcely be considered as a romance. We are presented, alternately, with incredible martial achievements, the fruits of monkish credulity; and with miracles, the result of monkish superstition. We are, also, entertained with enchantments. The sword of Orlando, Durandal, or Durindana cannot strike without wounding; the body of Ferragus is rendered invulnerable by enchantments; and the terrible horn of Orlando, with which he blew a blast, at Roncevalles, for succour, is heard as far as Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, where Charlemagne lies with his army; but the traitor Ganelon prevents the monarch from

repairing to the assistance of his nephew. Orlando, abandoning all hope, attempts to break his sword, to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy, and being stained with Christian blood. He strikes it against trees and rocks, but nothing can resist the enchanted blade, when wielded by so powerful an arm. The trees are cut down and the rocks fly into splinters, but Durandal still remains unbroken. At last, Orlando drives it up to the hilt in a hard rock, and bending it violently, it breaks in his hand. He again sounds his horn, not in hope of succour, but to announce to the Christians that their hour is come ; and he blows so violent a blast, that his veins burst, and he expires, weltering in his blood. This is extremely poetical, and indicates a brilliant imagination ; but to make it into a chivalric romance, it would be necessary to introduce women and love ; subjects which are entirely excluded.

The author of the Chronicle of Turpin had no intention of laying claim to the fame of a creative genius, or of amusing the idle, by tales obviously fictitious. He presented to the French all the wonderful facts, which he related, as purely historical ; and the reader of such fabulous legends was accustomed to give credit to still more marvellous narratives. Many of these fables, were, therefore, again brought forward in the ancient Chronicle of Saint Denis, the compilation of which was commenced by the command of the Abbé Suger, minister to Louis the young (1137—1180,) although the work was written without any idea of imposing fictions upon the world, and as an authentic history of the times. Thus we find that it contains, in an abridged form, the same account as in Turpin, of Orlando and his duel with Ferragus ; of the twelve peers of France ; the battle of Roncevalles, and the wars of Charlemagne against the Saracens. The portrait of the monarch is borrowed, almost word for word, from the Chronicle of Turpin.—" He was a man of strong heart and great stature, but not too great ; seven feet, of the measure of his own foot, was he in height ; his head was round ; his eyes large, and so clear, that, when he was angry, they sparkled like carbuncles. He had a large straight nose, rising a little in the middle ; his hair was brown, and his face fresh-coloured, pleasant, and cheerful. He was so strong that he could easily straighten three horseshoes at once, and raise an

armed knight on the palm of his hand from the earth. *Joyeuse*, his sword, could cut an armed knight in two," &c.*

But all these marvellous narratives, which then passed for history,† furnished materials for the romances at the conclusion of the crusades, which had introduced a knowledge of the East, at the end of the thirteenth century, and during the reign of Philip the Bold (1270-1285). Adenez, the king-at-arms of this monarch, wrote the romances of Bertha-au-grand-pied, the mother of Charlemagne, Ogier the Dane, and Cleomadis, in verse; and Huon de Villeneuve, the romance of Renaud de Montauban. The four sons of Aymon, Huon de Bordeaux, Doolin de Mayence, Morgante the Giant, Maugis the Christian Enchanter, and many other heroes of this illustrious court, have found, either at that or a subsequent period, chroniclers, who have celebrated the characters and the events of that glorious age, which has been consecrated by the divine poem of Ariosto.

The invention of this brilliant system of romantic chivalry was, however, perfected as early as the conclusion of the

* "Homs fut de cors fort, et de grant estature, et ne mie de trop grant; sept piez avoit de long à la mesure de ses piez; le chief avoit roont, les yeux grans et gros, et si clers que quant il étoit courrouciés, ils resplendissoient ainsi comme escarboucles; le nez avoit grant et droit, et un petit hault au milieu, brune chevelure, la face vermeille, lie et haligre; de si grant force estoit, que il estendoit trois fers de chevaux tous ensemble légierement, et levoit un chevalier armé sur sa paume de terre jusques amont. De joyeuse, s'épée, coupoit un chevalier tout armé," &e.

† When the ancient romance writers touch upon the subject of the court of Charlemagne, they assume a more elevated tone. They are not then repeating fables, but celebrating their national history, and the glory of their ancestors; and they claim the right of being heard with respect. The romance of Gerard de Vienne, one of the Paladins of Charlemagne, thus commences: (*Manuscript in the Royal Library*, 7498.3.)

Une chançon plait nos, que je vos die
Delhaut estoire, et de grand baronie;
Meillor ne peut être dite ne oie.
Cette n'est pas d'orgueil et de follie,
De trahison ou de losengerie,
Mais du Bar'nage que Jésus bénie,
Del plus très fier qui oncques fut en vie.
A Saint Denys à la maître abbayie
Dedans un livre de grant anciennerie
Trovons écrit, etc.

thirteenth century ; and all its characteristics are to be found in the romances of Adenez. The knights no longer wandered, like the cavaliers of the Round Table, through the dark forests of a semi-barbarous country, covered with mists and white with frosts. The whole universe was exposed to their eyes. The Holy Land, indeed, was the grand object of their pilgrimages ; but, by that means, they established an intercourse with the extensive and wealthy kingdoms of the East. Their geography, like all their information, was much confused. Their voyages from Spain to Carthage, and from Denmark to Tunis, were accomplished with a facility and rapidity, even more surprising than the enchantments of Maugis or Morgana. These fantastic voyages furnished the Romance writers with opportunities of adorning their narrative with the most splendid descriptions. All the luxury and perfumes of the most highly-favoured countries were at their command. The pomp and magnificence of Damascus, of Bagdad, and of Constantinople, swelled the triumph of their heroes. But the most precious of all their acquisitions, was the imagination of the people of the South and the East ; that brilliant and playful faculty, so well calculated to give animation to the sombre mythology of the North. The *fays* were no longer hideous wretches, the object of popular hatred and dread, but the rivals or allies of those enchanters, who, in the East, disposed of the seal of Solomon, and of the Genii who waited upon it. To the art of prolonging life, they added that of multiplying pleasures. They were, in a manner, the priestesses of nature, and all her pomps. At their voice, magnificent palaces started up in the deserts ; enchanted gardens and perfumed groves of oranges and myrtles burst forth amid the sands, or on the rocks of the ocean. Gold, and diamonds, and pearls, sparkled upon their garments, or along the walls of their palaces ; and their love, far from being considered sacrilegious, was the sweetest recompense of a warrior's toils. Ogier the Dané, the valiant Paladin of Charlemagne, was thus welcomed by the fay Morgana to her castle of Avalon. Morgana, taking a crown of gold ornamented with jewels, representing the leaves of the laurel, the myrtle, and the rose, tells the knight that she had, with five of her sisters, endowed him from his birth, and that she had then chosen him for her favourite.—"Here

reign," says she, "and receive this crown, a symbol of the authority which you shall ever exercise here." Ogier permits her to place upon his head the fatal crown, to which belonged the gift of immortal youth ; but, at the same time, every sentiment was effaced from his mind, except love for Morgana. The hero forgets the court of Charlemagne, and the glory he had gained in France ; the crowns of Denmark, of England, of Acre, of Babylon, and of Jerusalem, which he had successively worn ; the battles he had fought, and the many giants he had conquered. He passes two hundred years with Morgana, intoxicated with love, without noting the lapse of time ; but, upon his crown accidentally falling into a fountain, his memory is restored. He believes that Charlemagne is still alive, and he eagerly asks for intelligence of the brave Paladins, his companions in arms.* When

* Morgana, who meets Ogier on a loadstone rock, which attracts his vessel, in the first place restores his youth to him. "Then she approached Ogier, and gave him a ring, which was of such virtue, that, though he had numbered a hundred years, he was immediately restored to the age of thirty." She thus prepared him for an introduction into an assembly of the "finest nobles that were ever seen." In fact, King Arthur and all the peers of ancient chivalry, for three hundred years past, were assembled in the delicious spot into which the knight of Charlemagne was admitted.

"Or quand Morgue approcha du château, ses fées vindrent au-devant d'Ogier, chantant le plus mélodieusement qu'on sauroit jamais ouïr ; puis entra dedans la salle pour soi deduyre totalement. Adonc vit plusieurs dames fées aornées, et toutes couronnées de couronnes très-somptueusement faites, moult riches ; et long du jour chantoient, dansoient, et menoient joyeuse vie, sans penser à quelque chose, fors prendre leurs mondains plaisirs. Et ainsi que Ogier, il devisoit avec les dames, tantôt arriva le roi Arthus, auquel Morgue la fée dit : Approchez-vous, monsiegneur mon frère, et venez saluer la fleur de toute chevalerie, l'honneur de toute la noblesse de France, celui où bonté, loyauté, et toute vertu est enclose. C'est Ogier de Danemarck, mon loyal ami et mon seul plaisir, auquel régit toute l'espérance de ma liesse. Adonc le roi vint embrasser Ogier très-amiablement. Ogier, très-noble chevalier, vous soyez le très-bien venu, et regratic très-grandement notre Seigneur de ce qu'il m'a envoyé un si très-notable chevalier. Si le fit servir incontinent au siége de Machar, par grant honneur, dont il remercia le roi Arthus très-grandement ; puis Morgue la fée lui mit une couronne dessus son chef, moult riche et prétieuse. si que nul vivant ne la sauroit priser nullement. Et avec ce qu'elle étoit riche, elle avoit en elle une vertu merveilleuse ; car tout homme qui la portoit sur son chef, il oublioit tout deuil, mélancolie et tristesse, ne jamais ne lui sonvenoit de pays ni de parens qu'il eut ; car tant qu'elle fut sur son chef, n'eut pensement

we peruse this pleasing fiction, we easily perceive that it was written after the crusade had mingled the nations of the East and the West, and enriched the French with all the treasures of Arabian imagination.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE VARIOUS POETRY OF THE TROUVÈRES; THEIR ALLEGORIES; FABLIAUX; LYRICAL POEMS; MYSTERIES AND MORALITIES.

ALTHOUGH the literature of France is entirely distinct from the Romantic literature, having adopted a different set of rules, and a different spirit and character, yet the literature of the Langue d'Oil and of the Trouvères, which was that of ancient France, had the same origin as that of the South. It owed its birth, in the same manner, to the mixture of the Northern nations with the Romans. Chivalry and the feudal system, the manners and opinions of the middle ages, gave it its peculiar character; and not only did it belong to the same class as the literature of Provence, of Italy, and of Spain, but it even exercised a very perceptible influence over those countries. It is amongst the Trouvères that we must look for the origin of the chivalric poems, the tales, the allegories, and the dramatic compositions, of southern Europe. Thus, although none of their works have obtained a high reputation, or deserve to be ranked amongst the masterpieces of the human intellect, they are still worthy of our attention, as monuments of the progress of the mind, and as gleams of that rising taste which has since been fully developed.

Nothing is more difficult than to define the constituent qualities of poetry. As the peculiar object of this divine art is to captivate the whole soul, to allure it from its seat, and to transport it to a higher sphere, where it may enjoy delights which seem reserved for more perfect beings, every one is only sensible, in poetry, to that which is in unison with his own character, and values it in proportion to its power of exciting the feelings which most strongly affect him, and which

queleonque ne de la dame Clarice, ne de Guyon son frère, ne de son neveu Gautier, ne de créature qui fût en vie, car tout fut mis lors en oubli." *Fol. G. Lit. Goth.* Ogier-le-Danois. Printed by Alain Lotrian and Denys Janot, without name of place or year, in 12mo.

most largely contribute to his own enjoyments. Hence some regard imagination as the essence of poetry. Others have supposed it to consist in feeling, in reflection, in enthusiasm, or in liveliness. It appears, then, that if we are desirous of being correctly understood, we must apply the name of poetry to every composition in which men, gifted with genius, express their various emotions; that we must give that name to every production which unites harmony and rich expression; and that we must admit that all the powers of the mind may, in their turn, be clothed in that brilliant form, that melodious and figurative language, which captivates all the senses at once, striking upon the ear with a regular cadence, and presenting to the mind's eye all the pictures of its marvellous creation.

When we thus adopt the name of poetry, as descriptive of the form of expression only, we shall be better able to comprehend how the poetry of one nation differs, in its essential characteristics, from that of another; and how strictly it is in accordance with those qualities, which are most powerfully developed amongst the nation by whom it is cultivated. The character of a people is always communicated to their poetry. Amongst the Provençals, it is full of love and gallantry; amongst the Italians, it abounds with playful imagination. The poetry of the English is remarkable for its sensibility; that of the Germans, for its enthusiasm. In the Spanish poetry, we remark a wildness of passion, which has suggested gigantic ideas and images; while, in the Portuguese, there is a spirit of soft melancholy and pastoral reflection. All these nations considered those subjects alone to be adapted to poetry, which were accordant with their own dispositions; and they all agreed in considering the character of the French nation as anti-poetical. The latter, again, even from the earliest period, have testified their aversion to the more contemplative qualities of the mind, and have given the preference to wit and argument, cultivating the imagination only inasmuch as it assists the faculty of invention. The witty and argumentative taste of this nation has gradually increased. The French have attached themselves almost exclusively, in their poetry, to the narrative style, to wit, and to argument; and they have, therefore, become such complete strangers to romantic poetry, that they have detached themselves from all the other modern

nations, and have placed themselves under the protection of the ancients. Not because the ancients, like them, confined themselves to the elegant arrangement of the action, to conventional proprieties, and to argumentative conclusions, but because they developed all the human faculties at one and the same time; and because the French discovered in the classical authors, which are the admiration of all Europe, those qualities upon which they themselves set the highest value. Hence, modern writers have been divided into two parties so diametrically opposite to each other, that they are each incapable of comprehending the principles upon which the other proceeds.

But, before the French had raised the standard of Aristotle, which occurred about a century and a half ago, poetry was not an art which was practised by rule, but rather an inspiration. The works of the Trouvères already differed from those of the Troubadours, without any opposition having arisen between them. The poets of the South, on the contrary, perceiving nothing revolting to their taste in the difference of style, profited by the circumstance, and enriched their poems with the inventions of the people who were situated to the north of the Loire.

The French certainly possessed, above every other nation of modern times, an inventive spirit. Complaints, and sighs, and passionate expressions, were more fatiguing to them than to any other people. They required something more real, and more substantial, to captivate their attention. We have seen that amongst them the rich and brilliant inventions of the romances of chivalry originated. We shall soon see that they were the inventors of the *Fabliaux*, or tales of amusement, and that it was they, also, who inspired more life into their narrations, by placing the circumstances before the eyes of the spectators in their mysteries; a dramatic invention, which owes its rise to them. On the other hand, we find them, at the same period, producing some tedious works of a different kind; those allegorical poems, which were subsequently imitated by all the romantic nations, but which seem to be more immediately the offspring of French taste, and which, even to the present day, find some imitators amongst our poets. This allegorical form of composition gratified, at once, the national taste for narrative pieces, and the still more na-

tional attachment to compositions which unite wit and argument to a moral aim. The French are the only people who, in poetry, look to the object of the composition; and they, perhaps, understand better than any other nation how to accomplish their purpose. They, therefore, always write with a definite aim in view; whilst other nations conceive it to be the essence of poetry not to seek any certain object, but to abandon themselves to unpremeditated and spontaneous transports, courting poetry from inspiration alone.

The most celebrated, and perhaps the most ancient, of these allegorical poems, is the Romance of the Rose; a name known to every one, although few persons are acquainted with the nature and object of the work itself. It is necessary to premise, that the Romance of the Rose, is not a romance in the sense which we attach, at the present day, to that word. At the period at which it was composed, the French was still called the Romance language, and all the more voluminous productions in that tongue were consequently called *Romans*, or Romances. The Romance of the Rose contains twenty thousand verses; and it is the work of two different authors. Four thousand one hundred and fifty verses were written by Guillaume de Lorris; while his continuator, Jean de Meun, produced the remainder of the poem, fifty years later.

Guillaume de Lorris proposed to treat on the same subject, which Ovid had adopted in his Art of Love. But the dissimilarity between the two works very plainly marks the distinction which existed between the spirit of the two ages. Guillaume de Lorris makes no appeal to lovers; he speaks not either from his own feelings, or his own experience; he relates a dream; and this eternal vision of his, which would certainly have occupied not a few nights, in no point resembles a real dream. A crowd of allegorical personages appear before him, and all the incidents of a tedious passion are converted into real beings, and endowed with names. There is first *Dame Oiseuse*, or Lady Idleness, who inspires the lover with the desire of finding the *Rose*, or the reward of Love. Then there are *Male-bouche* and *Dangier*, who mislead him; and *Felonie*, *Bassesse*, *Haine*, and *Avarice*, who impede his pursuit. All human virtues and vices are thus personified and introduced upon the scene. One allegory is

linked to another, and the imagination wanders amongst these fictitious beings, upon whom it is impossible to bestow any corporeal attributes. This fatiguing invention is necessarily destructive of all interest. We are far more willing to bestow our attention upon a poem which relates to human feelings and actions, however insignificant they may be, than upon one which is full of abstract sentiments and ideas, represented under the names of men and women. At the period, however, when the Romance of the Rose first appeared, the less it interested the reader as a narrative, the more it was admired as a work of intellect, as a fine moral conception, and as philosophy clothed in the garb of poetry. Brilliant passages struck the eye at every line; the object of the author was never out of sight; and since poetry was regarded by the French as the vehicle of agreeable instruction, they must necessarily have been of opinion, that the Romance of the Rose was admirably calculated for attaining this end, as it contained a rich mine of pleasing information. Upon this question of instruction and moral discipline, we should decide very differently at the present day. It is no longer thought, that, in recommending virtue, it is necessary to paint vice with grossness, as is frequently done by Guillaume de Lorris. We should no longer tolerate the cynical language, and the insulting manner, in which he, and especially his successor, Jean de Meun, speak of the female sex; and we should be shocked at their indecency, so opposed to every idea of love and chivalric gallantry which we now entertain. Our ancestors were, doubtless, much less delicate than we. No book was ever more popular than the Romance of the Rose. Not only was it admired as a masterpiece of wit, invention, and practical philosophy, but the reader attempted to discover in it matters which had never entered into the contemplation of the author. One allegory was not sufficient, and a second was sought for. It was pretended that Lorris had veiled, in this poetical form, the highest mysteries of theology. Learned commentaries were written upon it, which are appended to the Paris edition, (folio, 1531,) and in which a key is given to this divine allegory, which is said to pourtray the grace of God and the joys of Paradise, in those licentious passages which describe terrestrial love. It must be confessed, that this admiration of a work which contained

many immoral passages, excited, at length, the animadversions of some of the fathers of the Church. Jean Gerson Chancellor of the University of Paris, and one of the most respected of the Fathers of the Council of Constance, published a Latin treatise against the Romance of the Rose. From this period, many preachers fulminated their censures against the corrupting volume; whilst others did not scruple to cite passages from it in the pulpit, and to mingle the verses of Guillaume de Lorris with texts of holy writ.

Whilst the national character of the French was thus manifested in the allegorical form which Guillaume de Lorris gave to this didactic poem, it was likewise recognized in the style which he selected. To narrate with neatness, clearness, and a degree of simplicity, to which, at the same time, elegance, precision of expression, and a mixture of abstract sentiment are united, appeared to the French, at that time, to be the essence of the poetical art. Even yet, they regard as poetical, those compositions in which other nations can distinguish nothing but rhymed prose. The Romance of the Rose, and its numberless imitations, are of this class. The language is never figurative; it presents nothing to the eye; it neither proceeds from, nor affects, the heart; and if the measure of the verse were taken away, it would be impossible to recognize it as poetry. In the note, some of the best passages of the poem are extracted.*

* The origin of royalty is represented in the following lines:—

Les homs la terre se partirent,
Et au partir, bornes y mirent:
Mais quand les bornes y mettoient,
Maintes fois s'entrecombattoient,
Et se tollurent ce qu'ils purent;
Les plus forts les plus grands parts eurent. . .
Lors, convint que l'on ordonnât
Aucun qui les bornes gardât,
Et qui les malfaiteurs tous prit,
Et si bon droit aux plaintifs fit
Que nul ne l'osât contredire:
Lors s'assemblèrent pour l'élire. . . .
Un grand vilain entr'eux élurent.
Le plus ossu de quant qu'ils furent,
Le plus corsu, et le *greigneur* (*plus grand*)
Et le firent prince et seigneur . . . .
Cil jura que droit leur tiendroit,

Guillaume de Lorris commenced the Romance of the Rose, in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, and died in 1260. His successor, Jean de Meun, surnamed Clopinel, was not born until 1280. The continuation of the Romance of the Rose is posterior to the great poem of Dante, which is, like it,

> Se chacun en droit soit lui livre
> Des biens dont il se puisse vivre . . . .
> De là vint le commencement
> Aux rois et princes terriens
> Selon les livres anciens.

The following is a celebrated representation of Time, which has been often quoted:

> Le Temps qui s'en va nuit et jour
> Sans repos prendre et sans séjour;
> Et qui de nous se part et emble
> Si secrètement qu'il nous semble
> Que maintenant soit en un point,
> Et il ne s'y arrête point;
> Ains ne *fine* d'outre passer (*cesse*),
> Sitôt que ne sauriez penser
> Quel temps il est présentement:
> Car avant que le pensement
> Fut fini, si bien y pensez
> Trois temps seroient déjà passés.

The next lines contain the portrait of Love, which, in a poem written in his honour, ought certainly to be the most admirable passage in the book:

> Le dieu d'amour, cil qui départ
> Amourettes à sa devise,
> C'est cil qui les amans attise,
> Cil qui abbat l'orgueil des braves,
> Cil fait les grands seigneurs esclaves,
> Et fait servir royne et princesse,
> Et repentir none et abbesse.

A portrait of Dame Beauty:

> Celle dame avoit nom Beauté,
> Qui point n'étoit noire ne brune,
> Mais aussi clère que la lune
> Est envers les autres estoiles
> Qui semblent petites chandelles.
> Tendre chair eut comme rosée;
> Simple fut comme une épousée,
> Et blanche comme fleur de lys.
> Le *vis* (*visage*) eut bel, doux et *alys* (*poli*);
> Et estoit grêle et alignée,
> Fardée n'estoit ne pignée,
> Car elle n'avait pas mestier
> De soi farder et nettoyer;
> Cheveux avoit blonds et si longs
> Qu'ils lui battoient jusqu'aux talons;
> Beaux avoit le nez et la bouche.
> Moult grand douleur au cuer me touche
> Quand de sa beauté me remembre
> Pour la façon de chacun membre. . . .
> Jeune fut et de grand faconde,
> Saige plaisante, gaie et *cointe* (*agréable*),
> Gresle, gente, frisque et *accointe* (*adroite*).

Even the title of the work was in rhyme:

> Cy est le rommant de la Rose
> Où tout art d'amour est enclose.
> Histoires et autorités,
> Et maints beaux propos usités.
> Qui a été nouvellement
> Corrigé suffisantement,
> Et coté bien à l'avantaige
> Com on voit en chacune paige.

a vision. Guillaume de Lorris is, however, the true inventor of that style of writing, and the innumerable poetical visions, which occupy so large a space in modern literature, are all imitations of the Romance of the Rose.

The first imitations of this poem appeared in French, and, like their model, they bear the title of romances. One of these romances, which was very famous in its day, and copies of which are frequently met with in libraries, is that of the *Trois Pelerinages*, composed by Guillaume de Guilleville, a Cistercian monk, between 1330 and 1358. This is, also, a dream, of a most appalling length; for each pilgrimage occupies a poem of ten or twelve thousand verses, forming a quarto volume. The first is the pilgrimage of man, or human life; the second, the pilgrimage of the soul after it has left the body, or the life to come; the third, the pilgrimage of Jesus Christ, or the life of our Lord. Guilleville tells us in his poem, that the Romance of the Rose was his model; but it is easy to perceive that he has likewise imitated Dante, whose immortal poem had appeared in the interval. Thus, in his orthodox visions, Guilleville takes Ovid for his guide, as Dante was conducted by Virgil through the regions of the dead. But Virgil was in reality the master of the Florentine, and had inspired him with the perception and the enthusiasm of poetry; whilst Guilleville owes nothing to Ovid, and has no connexion with the guide whom he pretends to follow.

About the same time, appeared the *Bible Guyot*,* the work of Hugues de Bercy, surnamed Guyot, a bitter satire against all classes of society. It contains the Book of *Mandevie*, or the amendment of the life; the Book of *Clergie*, or of the sciences; and many others of the same kind, in which

* The following is a fragment of this poem. The title of *Bible* is merely synonymous with *Book*,

Contre les Femmes.

Nulli ne pot oncqu' accomplir
Voloir de femme; c'est folie
De cherchier lor être et lor vie,
Quand li sages n'y voient goute...
Femme ne fut oncques vaincue
Ne apertement bien cognue:
Quand li œil pleure li cuer rit,
Peu pense à ce qu'elle nous dit,
Moult mue souvent son courage,
Et tost a déçu le plus sage
Quand me *membre* (*souvient*) de Salomon,
De Costantin et de Samson
Que femmes inganièrent si,
Moult me *tuit* (*convient*) d'être esbahi.

tiresome allegories partially conceal morals no less fatiguing. We should feel astonished at the patience of our forefathers, who could thus devour these long and stupid works, did we not remember that the people of that day were almost entirely without books, and that there was nothing around them which could extend or awaken their ideas. A single work, a single volume, was the treasure of a whole mansion. In unfavourable weather, it was read to a circle around the fire; and when it was finished, the perusal was again commenced. The wit of the company was exercised in discovering its applications, and in speculating upon its contents. No comparison with other works enabled them to form a judgment upon its merits. It was reverenced like holy writ, and they accounted themselves happy in being able to comprehend it; as though it were a great condescension in the author, to accommodate himself, sometimes, to their capacities.

Our ancestors likewise possessed another species of poetry, which, though it might not display greater inventive talents, nor a more considerable portion of that inspiration and fire, upon which other nations have bestowed the epithet of poetical, was, at least, exceedingly amusing. Such are the *fabliaux*, the brilliant reputation of which has been revived in the present age. They have been represented as treasures of invention, originality, simplicity, and gaiety, of which other nations can furnish no instances, but by borrowing from the French. A vast number of these ancient tales, written in verse, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are preserved in the Royal Library at Paris. M. de Caylus has given an account of them in his entertaining papers, published in the Transactions of the Academy of Inscriptions. M. Grand d'Aussy has, likewise, made a selection, which he has presented to the public in a more modern dress; and, lastly, M. M. Barbazan and Méon have published four large volumes of these Tales, in the original language, and often with their original grossness. This important portion of the literature of the middle ages merits our attention, as affording an insight into the manners and spirit of the times, and as pointing out the origin of many of those inventions, to which men of other ages and other nations have subsequently laid claim. But researches of this kind are not suited to every one. The dictates of delicacy, decency, and modesty, were

little respected in the good old times ; and the Trouvères, to excite the gaiety of the knights and ladies who received them at their courts, would often amuse them with very licentious wit. The grossness of their language was esteemed pleasantry, and the most dissolute manners were the most inviting subjects of their verse.

The French, who always accounted elegance and easiness of style to be the essence of poetry, availed themselves, with eagerness, of every tale of gallantry, and every adventure and anecdote, which could awaken curiosity or excite mirth. These, they put into verse, and then called themselves poets, whilst every other nation reserved such subjects for prose. A collection of Indian tales, entitled *Dolopathos*, or the King and the Seven Wise Men, having been translated into Latin, about the tenth or eleventh century, was the first storehouse of the Trouvères. The Arabian tales, which were transmitted by the Moors to the Castilians, and by the latter to the French, were in their turn versified. Even the romantic adventures of the Provençal Knights and Troubadours, furnished the Trouvères with subjects for their tales. But, above all, the anecdotes which they collected in the towns and castles of France ; the adventures of lovers ; the tricks which were played upon the jealousy and credulity of husbands ; the gallantries of priests, and the disorders of convents, supplied the reciters of tales with inexhaustible materials for their ludicrous narratives. These were treasures common to them all. We seldom know the name of the Trouvère by whom these anecdotes have been versified. Others related them anew, adapting them to their own taste, and adding to, or retrenching from them, according to the impression which they wished to make upon their auditors. Thus it is, that we find in the fabliaux, every variation of the language. At the period we are discussing, there were neither theatrical entertainments, nor games at cards, to fill up the leisure hours of society. It was found necessary to devise some means of passing the long evenings in courts and castles, and even in private houses ; and the Trouvères, or relaters of tales, were therefore welcomed, with an eagerness proportioned to the store of anecdotes which they brought with them to enliven conversation. Whatever was the subject of their verse, they were equally acceptable. Legends,

miracles, and licentious anecdotes, were related by the same men to the same companies; and, in the collections of the ancient fabliaux, we find stories of the most opposite kind immediately succeeding each other. The most numerous are those tales, properly so called, which were the models of those of Boccaccio, of the Queen of Navarre, and of La Fontaine. Some of these old fabliaux have had great fame. They have been successively reproduced by all who have any pretensions to the narrative art, and they have passed from age to age, and from tongue to tongue, down to our own days. Several of them have been introduced upon the theatre, and have furnished fresh food for French gaiety. The fabliau of the *Faucon* gave rise to the opera of *Le Magnifique.* That of the *Myre* produced *Le Medecin malgré lui,* and to *La Housse partie* we are indebted for the comedies of *Conaxa* and *Les Deux Gendres.* In the fabliaux, we find the originals of Parnell's poem of the *Hermit,* of the *Zadig* of Voltaire, and of the tale of *Renard,* which Goëthe has converted into a long poem, under the title of *Reinecke Fuchs. Le Castoyement d'un Père à son Fils,* is a collection of twenty-seven fabliaux, connected with one another, and forming a manual of instruction, presented by a father to his son, on his entrance into the world. The *Ordène de Chevalerie* is a simple and interesting recital of the mode, in which the Sultan Saladin caused himself to be dubbed a knight, by the Crusaders whom he had vanquished. In that poem, we find many authentic and contemporary details respecting the order of knighthood, the various ceremonies which accompanied the presentation of the different pieces of armour to the new-made knight, and the signification of these various chivalric customs, which are not to be met with elsewhere. Some of the fabliaux very nearly approach the romances of chivalry; describing, like them, the heroic manners of the nobles, and not the vices of the common people. These alone are really poetical, and display a creative imagination, graceful pictures, elevated sentiments, lively representations of character, and that mixture of the supernatural, which so completely seduces the imagination. It is in a fabliau of this class, *Le Lay de l'Oiselet**, that we

* *Fabliaux*, vol. iii. p. 119.

meet with the following comparison between the worship of God and of Love.

> And, in truth, you well may see,
> God and Love do both agree :*
> God loves truth and reverence,
> Nor with those will Love dispense;
> God hates pride and treachery,
> And Love likes fidelity;
> God Loves honour and courtesy,
> So does love as well as he;
> God to prayers will give an ear,
> Nor does Love refuse to hear.

To the same class belongs, also, the Lay of Aristotle, by Henry d'Audeley,† from which we have derived the entertaining opera of *Aristote Amoureux*. In the middle ages, antiquity was represented in the garb of chivalry. The people of that day could scarcely comprehend, how there could have existed manners and a mode of life different from their own. Ancient Greece, moreover, was only known to the people of the West, through the medium of the Arabians. The Lay of Aristotle was, in all probability, itself of eastern origin; for that philosopher, and his disciple, Alexander, were in the number of those Greeks, whose praises the Arabians had the greatest pleasure in celebrating.

Alexander, according to the poet, is arrested by Love, in the midst of his conquests. He dreams of nothing, but how he may amuse his mistress with festivals, and testify his passion. All his barons, his knights, and his soldiers, lament over his inactivity.

> But of this he took no care;
> For he found his Love so fair,
> Past his hopes, that his desire
> Never after mounted higher
> Than with her to live in bliss.
> Love a powerful master is,

---

* Et pour vérité vous record
Dieu et Amour sont d'un accord,
Dieu aime sens et honorance,
Amour ne l'a pas en viltance;
Dieu hait orgueil et fausseté,
Et Amour aime loyauté;
Dieu aime honneur et courtoisie,
Et bonne Amour ne hait-il mie;
Dieu écoute belle prière,
Amour ne la met pas arrière, etc.

† *Fabliaux*, vol i. p. 96.

Since of man so great and brave
He can make a humble slave,
Who no other care shall take
Than for his sweet lady's sake.*

No one dares to inform Alexander of the discontent of his army. His master, Aristotle, alone, whose authority over his pupil was the result of his vast knowledge and profound wisdom, reproaches the conqueror of the world with forgetting himself for love, with suffering his army to lie inactive in the midst of his conquests, and with disgusting the whole order of knighthood. Alexander, touched with these reproaches, promises to forsake his mistress, and remains some days without seeing her :

But her pleasant memory
Did not, with her presence, flee ;
Love recalls each lovely grace,
Her sweet manner, her fair face
In whose features you could trace,
Nought of malice or of ill ;
Her bright forehead, like some chill
And crystal fountain ; her fine form,
Fair hair, and mouth, with beauty warm :
How, in mischief's name, he cries,
Can I live, without this prize ? †

At last, he can no longer resist the desire of again beholding her ; and he returns to her, excusing his absence by relating how sharply he had been reprimanded by his master. The lady swears to revenge herself, and to make Aristotle himself bow to the power of her charms. She seeks him in the garden where he is studying, and employs all the arts of coquetry to seduce him. The philosopher in vain calls to

* Dont il ne se repentoit mie,
Car il avoit trouvé sa mie
Si belle qu'on put souhaiter.
N'avoit cure d'ailleurs plaider,
Fors qu'avec lui manoir et être.
Bien est Amour puissant et maître,
Quand du monde le plus puissant
Fait si humble et obéissant
Qu'il ne prend plus nul soin de lui,
Ains s'oublie tout pour autrui.

† Mais il n'a pas le souvenir
Laissé ensemble avec la voie ;
Qu'Amour lui ramembre et ravoic
Son clair visage, sa façon,
Où il n'a nulle retraçon
De vilenie ni de mal ;
Front poli, plus clair que cristal,
Beau corps, belle bouche, blonc chef.
Ah, fait-il, comme à grand meschef
Veulent toutes gens que je vive ?

mind his age, his grey head, and his discoloured and meagre features. He perceives that he has devoted himself uselessly to study, and that all his learning will not preserve him from love. He humbly throws himself upon the compassion of the lady, and declares himself her slave. She does not upbraid him, but imposes a penance, to punish him for the rebellious counsels which he had given to his pupil.

Said the lady, you must bring
Yourself to do another thing;
If, indeed, you feel love's fire,
You must do what I desire:
Know, then, that it is my pride
This day, on your back to ride,
Through the grass and garden gay;
If you answer not with nay,
I will straightway saddle you,
That will be the best to do.*

The philosopher can refuse nothing to the lady, whom he so passionately loves. He falls on all fours, and suffers her to place a saddle on his back. The lady mounts, and guides him, with a string of roses, to the foot of the tower, where Alexander is waiting for her, and where he witnesses the triumph of love over "the most skilful clerk in all the world."†

But the most interesting, and, perhaps, the most celebrated of all the fabliaux, is that of Aucassin and Nicolette,‡ which Legrand has given under the title of *Les Amours du bon vieux temps*, and which has furnished the subject for a very agreeable opera, full of the splendours of chivalry. The original is written alternately in prose and verse, with a few lines of music occasionally interspersed. The language, which resembles that of Ville-Hardouin, seems to belong to the earlier part of the thirteenth century, and is the dialect of Champagne. The Provencals have, however, laid claim

* Dit la Dame; vous convient faire
Pour moi un moult divers affaire,
Si tant êtes d'amour surpris;
Car un moult grand talent m' a pris
De vous un petit chevaucher
Dessus cette herbe, en ce verger:
Et si veux, dit la Demoiselle,
Qu'il ait sur vos dos une selle,
Si serai plus honnêtement.

† [The Lay of Aristotle is to be found in Way's Fabliaux, vol. ii. p. 159; but the passage given by M. de Sismondi is not sufficiently literal, in the translation, to authorize its insertion. *Tr.*]

‡ *Fabliaux*, vol. i. p. 380.

to this tale, the scene of which is laid in their territories. Aucassin, the son of the Count de Beaucaire, falls passionately in love with Nicolette, a young girl whose parents are unknown, and whom his father is unwilling he should marry. In the mean time, the Count of Valencia, the enemy of Beaucaire, besieges the city, which is on the point of being taken; and the Count de Beaucaire in vain solicits his son to place himself at the head of the troops. Aucassin refuses to fight, unless his father will promise him Nicolette, as the reward of his valour. Having extorted this promise from the Count, he makes a sally, and returns victorious. The Lord of Beaucaire, relieved from his terror, forgets his promise, and being indignant at the idea of his son's unworthy alliance, he causes Nicolette to be carried off.

* Soon as her doom this hapless orphan spied,
To a small casement with quick step she hied,
And o'er the garden cast her wishful sight,
All gay with flowers it seem'd, a garden of delight;
On every spray the merry birds did sing,
And hail'd the season's prime with fluttering wing:
"Ah, woe is me!" she cried, in doleful cheer,
"Lo! here I bide, for ever prison'd here!
"Sweet love! sweet Aucassin! for thee confined!
"For that dear love which fills our mutual mind!
"Yet shall their deeds ne'er shake my constant will,
"For I am true of heart, and bent to love thee still!"†

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* [This translation is extracted from Mr. Way's Fabliaux, where the reader will find the story of Aucassin and Nicolette very beautifully paraphrased. See vol. i. p. 5.—*Tr.*]

† Nicolette est en prison mise,
Dans une chambre à voûte grise,
Bâtie par grand artifice,
Et empeinte à la mosaïce.
Contre la fenêtre marbrine
S'en vint s'appuyer la mesquine;
Chevelure blonde et poupine
Avoit, et la rose au matin
N'étoit si fraîche que son teint.
Jamais plus belle on ne vit.
Elle regarde par la grille,
Et voit la rose épanouie,
Et les oiseaux qui se dégoisent.
Lors se plaint ainsi l'orpheline:
Las, malheureuse que je suis!
Et pourquoi suis-je en prison mise?
Aucassin, damoiseau, mon sire,
Je suis votre fidele amie,
Et de vous ne suis point haie:
Pour vous je suis en prison mise,
En cette chambre à voûte grise.
J'y traînerai ma triste vie
Sans que jamais mon cœur varie,
Car toujours serai-je sa mie.

The preceding version has been selected, as approaching nearest to

It is unnecessary to make any further extracts from this fabliau, which the opera of Aucassin and Nicolette has rendered sufficiently known. Nicolette, escaping from her prison, takes refuge with the King of Torreloro, (Logodoro, or Le Torri, in Sardinia,) and afterwards in Carthage. Her birth is, in the meanwhile, ascertained to be illustrious, and she returns to Provence in disguise, where she is discovered by her lover, and all ends happily. The latter part of the tale is confused, and badly put together; but the first twenty pages of the poem are written with a simplicity, a purity, and a grace, which have, perhaps, never been equalled by any poet of the good old times.

The Trouvères likewise possessed a few lyrical poets. Although their language was less harmonious than that of the people of the South, and although their imagination was less lively, and their passions less ardent, yet they did not absolutely neglect a species of composition which formed the glory of their rivals. They attempted to introduce into the Langue d'Oil all the various forms of versification, which the Troubadours had invented for the Langue d'Oc. Lyrical poetry was more especially cultivated by the powerful nobility, and we have scarcely any other songs remaining, than such as are the composition of sovereign princes. Thibaud III., Count of Champagne, who flourished from 1201 to 1253, and who ascended the throne of Navarre in 1234, is the most celebrated of the French poets of the middle ages, not only on account of his regal dignity, but of his attachment, real or supposed, to Blanche of Castile, the mother of Saint Louis, and of the influence which his romantic amours had upon the affairs of his kingdom. The poems of the King of Navarre are exceedingly difficult to comprehend. Antique words were long considered in France as more poetical than modern ones; and thus, while the language of prose was polished and perfected, that of poetry retained all its early obscurity. The lyric poets, moreover, seem to have attached greater import-

the modern language. In the manuscripts printed by M. Méon, the poem is in verses of seven syllables, and commences thus:

Nicole est en prison mise
En une canbre vautie
Ki faite est par grant devises,
Panturée à miramie.
A la fenêtre marbrine
La s'apoya la mescine;
Elle avoit blonde la crigne
Et bien faite la sorcille, etc.

ance to the sound, to the alternation of the rhymes, and to the rigorous observation of the laws established by the Troubadours for regulating the construction of the stanza in their songs, their tensons, and their sirventes, than to the sense and the sentiments which they were expressing. The two volumes, therefore, of the King of Navarre's poems, which have been published by La Ravallière, are a curious monument of the language and manners of the times, but present few attractions to the reader.

Amongst the princes who led their troops to the later crusades, and whose verses have been preserved, may be mentioned Thierry de Soissons, of the ancient house of Nesle, who was made prisoner in Egypt, at the battle of Massoura; the Vidame de Chartres, of the ancient house of Vendôme; the Count of Brittany, Jean the son of Pierre de Dreux, called Mauclerc; the Lord Bernard de la Ferté; Gaces Brulés, a knight and gentleman of Champagne, and a friend of the King of Navarre; and Raoul II. de Coucy, killed in 1249, at the side of Saint Louis, at the battle of Massoura. His grandfather, Raoul I. de Coucy, the hero of the tragedy of Gabrielle de Vergy, was slain in Palestine, in 1191. The companions of St. Louis, the valorous knights who accompanied him to the crusade, were delighted with listening to the tales of the Trouvères, who, during the festivals, related to them amusing, and often licentious anecdotes, and diverted them with marvellous adventures. When, however, they assumed the lyre themselves, their own sentiments and their own passions were their theme. They sang of love or war, and they left to inferior bards the task of mere narration. In order to give some idea of this kind of composition, I shall extract, not in its original form, but in the shape which M. de Monterif has given it, one of the tender and almost languishing songs of Raoul de Coucy, his *Lay de departie*, when he followed Saint Louis to the crusade.

How cruel is it to depart,
Lady! who causest all my grief!
My body to its lord's relief
Must go, but thou retain'st my heart.
To Syria now I wend my way,
Where Paynim swords no terror move;
Yet sad shall be each lingering day,
Far from the side of her I love.

We learn from many a grave divine
That God hath written in his laws,
That, to avenge his holy cause,
All earthly things we must resign.
Lord ! I surrender all to thee !
No goods have I, nor castle fair;
But, were my lady kind to me,
I should not know regret nor care.

At least, in this strange foreign land,
My thoughts may dwell by night and day,
(Fearless of what detractors say)
On her whose smile is ever bland.*
And now I make my will—and here
I give, and fully do devise,
My heart to her I hold so dear,
My soul to God in Paradise.

Amongst the songs of the Châtelain de Coucy, preserved in the Royal Library, I know not whether I am correct in imagining that I have discovered the original of the piece given by M. de Monterif. The song, which is subjoined in the note,† is on the same subject, and has even many of the

* Que cruelle est ma départie,
Dame qui causez ma langueur !
Mon corps va servir son seigneur,
Mon cœur reste en votre balie ;
Je vais soupirant en Syrie,
Et des Payens n'ai nulle peur.
Mais dure me sera la vie
Loin de l'objet de mon ardeur.

L'on nous dit et l'on nous sermonne
Que Dieu, notre bon Créateur,
Veut que pour venger son honneur
Tout dans ce monde on abandonne.
A sa volonté je m'adonne ;
Je n'ai plus ni château ni bien,
Mais que ma belle me soit bonne,
Et je n'aurai regret à rien.

Du moins dans cette étrange terre
Pourrai-je penser jour et nuit
A ma dame au charmant souris,
Sans craindre la gent mauparlière ;
Et pour ma volonté dernière,
Je lègue, et clairement le dis,
Mon cœur à celle qui m'est chère,
Mon âme au Dieu de paradis.

---

† Oimi amors si dure départie
Me convendra faire de la moillor
Qui oncques fust amée ne servie.
Dex me ramoint à lui por sa douçor
Si voirement que j'en part à dolor.
Dex ! qu'ai-je dit, je ne m'en part je mie ;
Se li cors va servir notre seignor,
Tout li miens euers remaint en sa baillie.
Por li m'en vois sopirant ensurie,
Que nul ne doit faillir son Creator ;
Qui li faudra à cest besoing d'ahie,
Saehié de voir, faudra li à greignor,
Et saichiez bien li grant et li minor
Que là doit-on faire chétive vie.
Là se conquiert paradis et honor,
Et pers et los et l'amor de sa mie.

Lone

same rhymes; and yet it is not exactly the same thing. Another poem, likewise, on his departure, displays much sensibility at the commencement, but has no resemblance to the first piece.* The manuscript songs of these early French poets are not to be found in regular order, in the volumes in which we look for them. They are dispersed amongst a thousand other poems, and after having turned over many volumes, we cannot be confident that we have seen them all.

This race of heroes† was succeeded by other poets, who

Lonc tems avons esté prou paix oiseuze,
Or partira qui acertes iert preu;
Vescu avons à honte doloreuze,
Dont tous li monz est iriez et honteus;
Quant à nos tens est perdu li sains leus
Où Dex por nos soffrit mort angoisseuse,
Or ne nos doit retenir nule honeus
D'aller vengier cette perte honteuse.

Qui vuet avoir honre et vie enviouse
Se voist morir liez et bauz et joiauz,
Car cele mort est douce et savoreuse
Où conquis est paradis et honors;
Ne ja de mort n'en i morra i tous,
Ains vivront tuit en vie glorioure,
Et saichiez bien, qui ne fust amorouz,
Moût fust la voie et bele et delitouze.

Tuit li clergie, et li home d'aaige,
Que de bienfaiz et d'aumosnes vivront,
Partiront tuit à cest pelerinaige;
Et les Dames qui chastes se tendront,
Et léauté portent à ces qui iront.
Et se les font per mal conseil folage,
Ha! les quelx gens mauvaises les feront?
Car tuit li bons iront en cet viage.

Dex est assis en son haut héritage:
Or parra bien co cil le seeorront,
Cui il geta de la prison ombrage,
Quant il fut mis en la croix que tuit ont.
Certes tuit eil sont honnis que n'i vont
S'ils n'ont pov'té, ou vieillesse ou malage.
Et cil qui jove et sain, et riche sont
Ne porront pas demorer sans hontage.

* Another song of the Châtelain de Coucy thus begins:

S'oncques nuls homs por dure departie
Ot cuer dolant, je l'aurai por raison,
Oncques tortre qui pert son compaignon
Ne remest jor de moi plus esbahie.
Chacuns plore sa terre et son pays,
Quand il se part de ses coraux amis;
Mais nuls partir, saichiez, que que nuls die,
N'est dolorous, que d'ami et d'amie.

† The interest attached to the names of distinguished men, and to

polished the language of the Trouvères, and who, like their predecessors, confirmed the national taste for tales, allegories, and verses, in which wit and information were mingled. No extracts from these authors are given, because it is the object of this work to treat of French literature only in connexion with the Romantic poetry, and as it exerted an influence over the nations of the South. Instead of employing ourselves upon the poems of the historian Froissart, of Charles Duke of Orléans, of Alain Chartier, of Villon, and of Coquillart, who, however largely they contributed to the improvement of the French, had no share in forming the other languages of the South, we shall investigate the origin of the Mysteries, or the Romantic Drama, which first arose in France, and served as a model for the dramatic representations both of Spain and England.

The French justly claim the merit of being the first discoverers of a form of composition, which has given such a lively character to the works of the imagination. They define poetry and the fine arts, by calling them *imitative arts*, whilst other nations consider them as the effusion of the sentiments of the heart. The object of the French authors, in their tales, their romances, and their fabliaux, is to present a faithful picture

our historical recollections, gives a value to all the little poems, which have been written by the heroes of the crusades. We endeavour to discover in them the spirit and intimate thoughts of those *preux chevaliers*. This must be my excuse for inserting, in their modern form, a few stanzas of the third song of the Vidame de Chartres, in which he gives us the portrait of his mistress :

Ecoutez, nobles chevaliers,
Je vous tracerai volontiers
L'image de ma belle.
Son nom jamais ne le saurez,
Mais si parfois la rencontrez,
Aisément la reconnoîtrez
A ce portrait fidèle.

Ses cheveux blonds comme fil d'or
Ne sont ni trop longs ni trop cort,
Tous repliés en onde ;
Sous son front blanc comme le lys,
Où l'on ne voit taches ni plis,
S'élèvent deux sourcils jolis,
Arcs triomphans du monde.

Ses yeux bleus, attrayans, rians
Sont quelquefois fiers et poignans,
Clignotans par mesure ;
Par l'amour même ils sont fendus
De doux filets y sont tendus,
Et tombent cœurs gros et menus
Par si belle ouverture.

The following is the last stanza:

S'en savois plus, ne le dirois,
Car mon trop parler grevêroit
D'amor la confiance ;
Si ne peut chevalier d'honnour
Manquer à Dame et à Seignour
Sans de Dieu mériter rigour
Et rude pénitence

of the characters of others, and not to develope their own. They were the first, at a period when the ancient drama was entirely forgotten, to represent, in a dramatic form, the great events which accompanied the establishment of the Christian religion ; the mysteries, the belief in which was inculcated, as a part of that system ; or the incidents of domestic life, to excite the spectators to laughter, after the more serious representations. The same talent which enabled them to versify a long history in the heroic style, or to relate a humorous anecdote with the spirit of a jester, prompted them to adopt, in their dramas, similar subjects and a similar kind of versification. They left to those who had to recite these dialogues, the care of delivering them with an air of truth, and of accompanying them with the deception of scenic decoration.

The first who awakened the attention of the people to compositions, in which many characters were introduced, were the pilgrims who had returned from the Holy Land. They thus displayed to the eyes of their countrymen all which they had themselves beheld, and with which every one was desirous of being acquainted. It is believed, that it was in the twelfth, or at all events in the thirteenth century, that these dramatic representations were first exhibited in the open streets. It was not, however, until the conclusion of the fourteenth century, that a company of pilgrims, who, by the representation of a brilliant spectacle, had assisted at the solemnization of the nuptials between Charles VI. and Isabella of Bavaria, formed an establishment in Paris, and undertook to amuse the public by regular dramatic entertainments. They were denominated the Fraternity of the Passion ; from the Passion of our Saviour being one of their most celebrated representations.

This mystery, the most ancient dramatic work of modern Europe, comprehends the whole history of our Lord, from his baptism to his death. The piece was too long to be represented without interruption. It was, therefore, continued from day to day ; and the whole mystery was divided into a certain number of *journées*, each of which included the labours or the representation of one day. This name of *journée*, which was abandoned in France, when the mysteries became obsolete, has retained its place in the Spanish language, although its origin is forgotten. Eighty-seven characters, suc

cessively, appear in the Mystery of the Passion, amongst whom we find the three persons of the Trinity, six angels or archangels, the twelve apostles, six devils, Herod and his whole court, and a host of personages, the invention of the poet's brain. Extravagant machinery seems to have been employed, to give to the representation all the pomp which we find in the operas of the present day. Many of the scenes appear to have been recited to music, and we likewise meet with choruses. The intermingled verses indicate a very perfect acquaintance with the harmony of the language. Some of the characters are well drawn, and the scenes occasionally display a considerable degree of grandeur, energy, and tragic power. Although the language sometimes becomes very prosaic and heavy, and some most absurd scenes are introduced, we yet cannot fail to recognize the very high talents which must have been employed in the conception of this terrible drama, which not only surpassed its models, but, by placing before the eyes of a Christian assembly all those incidents for which they felt the highest veneration, must have affected them much more powerfully than even the finest tragedies can do, at the present day.

A few lines and quotations cannot give a clear idea of a work so long and various as this ; a work which, when printed in double columns, fills a large folio volume, and exceeds, in length, the united labours of our tragic authors. Still, as it is our object to enable the reader to judge for himself, and as we shall have occasion to present him with extracts from compositions no less barbarous in the earlier stage of the Spanish drama, and which are merely imitations of the great French Mystery, it will be as well to introduce, at least, some verses from this astonishing production, and to give an idea of the various styles, both tragic and comic, of the author. The clearness of the language, which is much more intelligible than that of the lyrical poets of the same period, immediately strikes us. Those poets attributed, not only more simplicity, but also more pomp to the antique phraseology. But this stately style of expression was excluded from poetry which was intended to become popular. The grandeur of the ideas and of the language of the Mystery of Passion, might be thought, in some instances, to belong to a more cultivated age. Thus, in the council of the Jews, in which many of the

Pharisees deliver their opinions at considerable length, Mordecai expresses himself in the following terms:

When the Messiah shall command,
We trust that, with a mighty hand,
In tranquil union, he shall rule the land;
His head shall with a diadem be crown'd;
Glory and wealth shall in his house abound;
In justice shall he sway it, and in peace;
And should the strong oppress or rob the poor,
Or tyrant turn the vassal from his door,
When Christ returns, these evils all shall cease.*

Saint John enters into a long discourse, and we can only account for the patience with which our forefathers listened to these tedious harangues, by supposing that their fatigue was considered by them to be an acceptable offering to the Deity; and that they were persuaded that every thing which did not excite them to laughter or tears, was put down to the account of their edification. The following scene in dialogue, in which Saint John undergoes an interrogation, displays considerable ability:—

ABYAS.

Though fallen be man's sinful line,
Holy Prophet! it is writ,
Christ shall come to ransom it,
And by doctrine, and by sign
Bring them to his grace divine.
Wherefore, seeing now the force
Of thy high deeds, thy grave discourse,
And virtues shewn of great esteem,
That thou art he, we surely deem.†

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* Quant Messias, quant le Crist règnera,
Nous espérons qu'il nous gouvernera
En forte main, en union tranquille;
Couronne d'or sur son chef portera,
Gloire et richesse en sa maison aura,
Justice et paix régira sa famille.
Et si le fort le povre oppresse ou pille,
Si le tyran son franc vassal exille,
Quant Crist viendra tout sera mis en ordre.

† ABYAS.

Sainct Prophète! il nous est escript
Que le Crist, pour nous racheter,
Se doit à nous manifester,
Et réduyre par sa doctrine
Le peuple en sa grace divine.
Par quoi, veu les enseignemens
Les haulx faits et les prêchemens
Dont tu endoctrines tes proesmes;
Nous doultons que ce soit toy-mesmes
Qui montres tes belles vertus.

SAINT JOHN.

I am not Messiah !—No !
At the feet of Christ I bow.

ELYACHIM.

Why, then, wildly wanderest thou,
Naked, in this wilderness ?
Say ! what faith dost thou profess ?
And to whom thy service paid ?

BANNANYAS.

Thou assemblest, it is said,
In these lonely woods, a crowd
To hear thy voice proclaiming loud,
Like that of our most holy men.
Art thou a king in Israel, then?
Know'st thou the laws and prophecies ?
Who art thou ? say !

NATHAN.

Thou dost advise
Messiah is come down below.
Hast seen him ? say, how dost thou know ?
Or art thou he?

SAINT JOHN.

I answer, No !

NACHOR.

Who art thou ? Art Elias then ?
Perhaps Elias ?

SAINT JOHN.

No !—

BANNANYAS.

Again !
Who art thou ? what thy name ? Express !
For never surely shall we guess.
Thou art the Prophet !

SAINT JEHAN.

Non suis ; je ne suis pas Christus,
Mais desouls lui je m'humilie.

ELYACHIM.

D'où te vient doncques la folie
De toi tenir en ces déserts,
Tout nu ; dis nous de quoi tu sers,
Et quelle doctrine tu presches ?

BANNANYAS.

On nous a dit que tu t'empesches
D'assembler peuples par ces bois
Pour venir escouter ta voix,
Comme d'un homme solemnel.
Es-tu donc maître en Israel ?
Scai-tu les lois et prophéties,
Qu'est-ce de toi ?

NATHAN.

Tu nous publies
Que Messyas est jà venu ;
Comme le scai-tu? l'as-tu vu ?
Est-ce toi ?

SAINT JEHAN.

Ce ne suis-je mye.

NACHOR.

Et quel homme es-tu donc ? Helye ?
Te dis-tu Helyas?

SAINT JEHAN.

Non.

BANNANYAS.

Non ?
Qui es-tu donc? quel es tton nom
Imaginer je ne le puis.
Tu es le Prophête!

SAINT

SAINT JOHN.
I am not—

ELYACHIM.
Who and what art thou? Tell us **what!**
That true answer we may bear
To our lords, who sent us here
To learn thy name and mission.

SAINT JOHN.
Ego
Vox clamantis in deserto.
A voice, a solitary cry
In the desert paths am I!
Smooth the paths, and make them meet,
For the great Redeemer's feet,
Him, who brought by our misdoing,
Comes for this foul world's renewing.

The result of this scene is the conversion of the persons to whom Saint John addresses himself. They eagerly demand to be baptized, and the ceremony is followed by the baptism of Jesus himself. But the versification is not so remarkable as the stage directions, which transport us to the very period of these Gothic representations.

"Here Jesus enters the waters of Jordan, all naked, and Saint John takes some of the water in his hand and throws it on the head of Jesus—

SAINT JOHN.
Sir, you now baptized are,
As it suits my simple skill,
Not the lofty rank you fill;
Unmeet for such great service I;
Yet my God, so debonair,
All that's wanting will supply.*

SAINT JEHAN.
Non suis.

ELYACHIM.
Qui es-tu donc? or te dénonce,
Afin que nous donnons réponse
Aux grans Princes de notre foi,
Qui nous ont transmis devers toi
Pour savoir qui tu es.

SAINT JEHAN.
Ego
Vox clamantis in deserto.
Je suis voix au désert criant,
Que chacun soit rectifiant
La voie du Sauveur du Monde,
Qui vient pour notre coulpe immonde
Réparer sans doubte quelconque.

* SAINT JEHAN.
Sire, vous êtes baptizé.
Qui à votre haute noblesse
N'appartient ne à ma simplesse,
Si digne service de faire;
Toutefois mon Dieu débonnaire
Veuille suppléer le surplus.

"Here Jesus comes out of the river Jordan, and throws himself on his knees, all naked, before Paradise. Then God the Father speaks, and the Holy Ghost descends, in the form of a white dove, upon the head of Jesus, and then returns into Paradise :—and note, that the words of God the Father be very audibly pronounced, and well sounded, in three voices; that is to say, a treble, a counter-treble, and a counter-bass, all in tune : and in this way must the following lines be repeated—

Hic est filius meus dilectus,
In quo mihi bene complacui.
C'estui-ci est mon fils amé Jésus,
Que bien me plaist, ma plaisance est en lui."

As this mystery was not only the model of subsequent tragedies, but of comedies likewise, we must extract a few verses from the dialogues of the devils, who fill all the comic parts of the drama. The eagerness of these personages to maltreat one another, or, as the original expresses it, *à se torchonner* (to give one another a wipe), always produced much laughter in the assembly.

BERITH.

Who he is I cannot tell—
This Jesus; but I know full well
That in all the worlds that be,
There is not such a one as he.
Who it is that gave him birth
I know not, nor from whence on earth
He came, or what great devil taught him,
But in no evil have I caught him;
Nor know I any vice he hath.

SATAN.

Haro ! but you make me wroth;
When such dismal news I hear.

BERITH.

Wherefore so ?*

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* BERITH.

Je ne sçay qui est ce Jésus,
Mais je croy qu'en l'universe.
N'en y a point encore ung te.
Qui que l'ait en terre conçu,
Ne sçay d'où il est issu,
Ne quel grant dyable l'a preschè.
Mais il n'est vice ne péché
De quoi je le sçusse charger.

SATHAN.

Haro, tu me fais enrager
Quand il faut que tels mots escoute

BERITH.

Et pourquoi ?

SATHAN.

SATAN.

Because I fear
He will make my kingdom less.
Leave him in the wilderness,
And let us return to Hell
To Lucifer our tale to tell,
And to ask his sound advice.

BERITH.

The imps are ready in a trice;
Better escort cannot be.

LUCIFER.

Is it Satan that I see,
And Berith, coming in a passion?

ASTAROTH.

Master! let me lay the lash on.
Here's the thing to do the deed.

LUCIFER.

Please to moderate your speed,
To lash behind and lash before ye,
Ere you hear them tell their story,
Whether shame they bring or glory.

As soon as the devils have given an account to their sovereign, of their observations and their vain efforts to tempt Jesus, Astaroth throws himself upon them with his imps, and lashes them back to earth from the infernal regions.

The example which was set by the author of the Mystery of the Passion, was soon followed by a crowd of imitators, whose names, for the most part, have been lost. The Mystery of the Conception, and the Nativity of our Lord, and of the Resurrection, are amongst the most ancient of these. The legends of the saints were, in their turn, dramatized and prepared for the theatre: and, in short, the whole of the Old Testament was brought upon the stage. In the same mys-

SATHAN.

Pour ce que je doubte
Qu'en la fin j'en soie désert.
Laissons-le ici en ce désert,
Et nous en courons en enfer
Nous conseiller à Lucifer,
Sur les cas que je lui veulx dire.

BERITH.

Les dyables vous veulent conduire,
Sans avoir meilleur sauf conduit.

LUCIFER.

J'aperçoy Sathan et Berith,
Qui reviennent moult empêchés.

ASTAROTH.

Si vous voulez qu'ils soient torchés,
Vecy les instrumens tous prêts.

LUCIFER.

Ne te hâte pas de si près,
A frapper derrière et devant;
Ouir faut leur rapport avant,
Sçavoir s'il nous porte dommage.

tery, the characters were often introduced at various stages of life, as infants, youths, and old men, represented by different actors; and in the margin of some of the mysteries we find, *Here enter the second, or the third, Israel or Jacob.* When the mystery was founded on historical facts not generally known, the poets exercised their own invention more freely, and did not hesitate to mingle comic scenes in very serious pieces. Thus, when they exhibited the saints triumphing over temptation, and their contempt for the allurements of the flesh, they often introduced language and scenes quite at variance with the serious nature of these sacred dramas.

The theatre, on which the mysteries were represented, was always composed of an elevated scaffold, divided into three parts; heaven, hell, and the earth between them. It was in this central portion that Jerusalem was sometimes represented, or occasionally the native country of some saint or patriarch, whither angels descended or devils ascended, as their interference in mundane affairs was called for. In the higher and the lower parts of the theatre, the proceedings of the Deity and Lucifer might be discerned. The pomp of these representations continued increasing for the space of two centuries; and, as great value was set on the length of the piece, some mysteries could not be represented in less than forty days.

The *Clercs de la Bazoche*, or Clerks of the Revels, who were an incorporated society at Paris, and whose duty it was to regulate the public festivities, at length resolved to amuse the people with some dramatic representations themselves. But, as the fraternity of the Passion had obtained, in 1402, a royal licence to represent mysteries, the clerks were compelled to abstain from that kind of exhibition, and they, therefore, invented a new one, which differed in name, rather than in substance, from the former. These were the *Moralities*, which were also borrowed from the historical parts, or the parables of the Bible, as that of the Prodigal Son. Sometimes they were purely allegorical compositions, in which God and the devil were introduced, accompanied by the virtues or vices. In a morality entitled *Le bien advisé et le mal advisé*, almost forty allegorical characters appear, and, amongst others, the different tenses of the verb *to reign*—as *Regno*, *Regnavi*, and *Regnabo*. In the course of this work, we shall

have occasion to notice, in speaking of the Spanish drama, even during the times of Lope de Vega and Calderon, the *Autos sacramentales*, which were allegorical pieces, evidently of the same nature as the ancient Moralities.

It is to the Clerks de la Bazoche, likewise, that we owe the invention of comedy. Whilst the fraternity of the Passion conceived themselves bound only to present edifying pieces to the public, the Clerks de la Bazoche, who did not consider themselves as ecclesiastics, mingled with their moralities, farces, of which the sole object was to excite the laughter of the spectators. All the gaiety and vivacity of the French character was displayed, in the ludicrous representations of such real adventures as had perhaps been the conversation of the town. The versification was managed with great care, and one of these farces, the *Avocat Pathelin*, which was represented for the first time in 1480, and has been attributed to an ecclesiastic of the name of Pierre Blanchet de Poitiers, may still be considered as a model of French gaiety and comic powers. None of these farces were more successful than this, and none have so well maintained their celebrity. It was translated into Latin, in 1512, by Alexander Connibert, and was imitated by the famous Reuchlin. Brueys remodelled it, and it was again brought forward in 1706, and is represented to the present day.

In the reign of Charles VI., likewise, and at the com mencement of the fifteenth century, a third comic company was established, the *Enfans sans souci*, who, under the command of the chief, *le Prince des sots*, undertook to make the French laugh at their own follies, and introduced personal, and even political satire upon the stage.

Thus, every species of dramatic representation was revived by the French. This was the result of that talent for imitation, which seems peculiar to the French people, assisted by a pliancy of thought, which enables them to conceive new characters, and a correctness of intellect, which always carries them directly to the object at which they aim, or to the effect which they wish to produce. All these discoveries, which led in other countries to the establishment of the Romantic drama, were known in France more than a century before the rise of the Spanish or Italian theatre, or even before the classical authors were first studied and imitated.

At the end of the sixteenth century, these new pursuits acquired a more immediate influence over the literature of France. They wrought a change in its spirit and its rules; but without altering the national character and taste, which had been manifested in the earliest productions of the Trouvères. It is here that the history of the literature of France has its commencement; and, at the same period, we shall abandon it. But, in examining the literature of the South, which, from the *Romance* languages, has been called the *Romantic*, it was necessary to bestow some attention upon one of the most celebrated of the romance dialects, and one, too, which boasts of poets who display so superior a fertility of invention. If it should be thought deficient in sensibility, in enthusiasm, in ardour, or in depth and truth of thought, it has yet surpassed all other languages in its inventive genius. We are now about to proceed to the History of Italian Poetry, from its rise, to the present times. Yet, even there, we shall recognise the spirit of the Trouvères in the majestic allegories of Dante, who, although he has infinitely surpassed it, has yet taken the Romance of the Rose for his model. We shall, likewise, trace the same spirit in the tales of Boccaccio, which are frequently nothing more than the ancient fabliaux. In the poems of Ariosto, also, and in all those chivalric epics, for which the romances of Adenez and his contemporaries prepared the way, the Trouvères will meet us. In the Spanish school, as late as the seventeenth century, we shall discover imitations of the ancient mysteries of the Trouvères; and Lope de Vega, and Calderon, will remind us of the fraternity of the Passion. Even amongst the Portuguese, Vasco Lobeira, the author of Amadis, seems to have been educated in this early French school. It is not, therefore, without sufficient reason, that, in a View of the Literature of the South, we have thought ourselves compelled to bestow some attention on the language, the spirit, and the poetry of our ancestors.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE—DANTE.

THE language of Provence had attained its highest degree of cultivation; Spain and Portugal had already produced more than one poet; and the *Langue d'Oil*, in the north of France, was receiving considerable attention, while the Italian was not yet enumerated amongst the languages of Europe, and the richness and harmony of its idiom, gradually and obscurely formed amongst the populace, were not as yet appreciated. But a great poet, in the thirteenth century, arose to immortalize this hitherto neglected tongue, and, aided by his single genius, it soon advanced with a rapidity which left all competition at a distance.

The Lombardian Duchy of Benevento, comprising the greater part of the modern kingdom of Naples, had preserved, under independent princes, and surrounded by the Greeks and the Saracens, a degree of civilization, which, in the earlier part of the middle ages, was unexampled throughout the rest of Italy. Many of the fine arts, and some branches of science, were cultivated there with success. The schools of Salerno communicated to the West the medical skill of the Arabs, and the commerce of Amalfi, introduced into those fertile provinces, not only wealth, but knowledge. From the eighth to the tenth century, various historical works, written, it is true, in Latin, but distinguished for their fidelity, their spirit, and their fire, proceeded from the pen of several men of talent, natives of that district, some of whom clothed their compositions in hexameter verses, which, compared with others of the same period, display superior facility and fancy. The influx of foreigners consequent upon the invasion of the Norman adventurers, who founded a sovereignty in Apulia, was not sufficiently great to effect a change in the language; and, under their government, the Italian or Sicilian tongue

first assumed a settled form. The court of Palermo, early in the twelfth century, abounded in riches, and consequently indulged in luxurious habits ; and there the first accents of the Sicilian muse were heard. There, too, at the same period, the Arabs acquired a degree of influence and credit which they have never possessed in any other christian court. The palace of William the First, like those of the monarchs of the East, was guarded by Mahometan eunuchs From them he selected his favourites, his friends, and sometimes even his ministers. To attach themselves to the arts and to the various avocations which contribute to the pleasures of life, was the peculiar province of the Saracens, by whom half of the island was still occupied. When Frederick the Second, at the end of the twelfth century, succeeded to the throne of the Norman monarchs, he transported numerous colonies of Saracens into Apulia and the Principality, but he did not banish them from either his service or his court. Of them his army was composed : and the governors of his provinces, whom he denominated Justiciaries, were chosen almost exclusively from their number. Thus was it the destiny of the Arabians, in the East as well as in the West of Europe, to communicate to the Latin nations their arts, their science, and their poetry.

From the history of Sicily, we may deduce the effects produced by Arabian influence on the Italian, or as it was then considered, the Sicilian poetry, with no less certainty than that with which we trace its connexion, in the county of Barcelona, and in the kingdom of Castile, with the first efforts of the Provençal and Spanish poets. William the First, an effeminate and voluptuous prince, forgot, in his palace of Palermo, amidst his Moorish eunuchs, in the song and the feast, those commotions which agitated his realms. The regency of the kingdom devolved, at his decease, upon his widow, who intrusted the government to Gayto Petro, the chief of the eunuchs, connected with the Saracens of Africa. All the commerce of Palermo was monopolized by the infidels. They were the professors of every art, and the inventors of every variety of luxury. The nation accommodated itself to their customs ; and in their public festivals, it was usual for Christian and Moorish women to sing in concert, to the music of their slaves. We may safely conclude that on these occa-

sions each party adopted their mother tongue ; and that the Italian females who responded, in melancholy cadence, to the tambours of their Moorish attendants, would, in all probability, adapt Sicilian words to African airs and measures.*

A complete separation had now taken place between the ordinary language of the country and the Latin tongue. Of the latter, the women were ignorant. The general adoption of the language to which their delicacy gave new graces, and in which alone they were accessible to the gallantry of their admirers, was a necessary result. It was now submitted to rules, and enlivened by that sensibility of expression, of which a dead and pedantic language ceases to be susceptible. For a century and a half, in fact, it would seem that the Sicilians confined themselves to the composition of love-songs alone. These primitive specimens of Italian poetry have been studiously preserved, and they have been analyzed by M. Ginguené, with equal talent and learning. To his work, such of our readers as may wish to obtain a more particular knowledge of these relics, will have satisfaction in referring ; nor can they apply to a better source of information, for more complete and profound details, on the subject of Italian poetry, than can possibly find a place in a condensed history of the general literature of the South.

The merit of amatory poetry consists, almost entirely, in its expression. Its warmth and tenderness of sentiment is injured by any exertion of mere ingenuity and fancy, in the pursuit of which the poet, or the lover, seems to lose sight of his proper object. Little more is required from him than to represent with sensibility and with truth, the feelings which are common to all who love. The harmony of language is the best means of expressing that of the heart. But this principle seems almost entirely to have escaped the notice of the first Sicilian and Italian writers. The example of the Arabs and of the Provençals induced them to prefer ostentation to simplicity, and to exercise a false and affected taste in the

* On the death of William the First of Sicily, says Hugo Falcandus, a celebrated contemporary historian, "Per totum autem hoc triduum mulieres, nobilesque matronæ, *maxime Saracenæ*, quibus ex morte regis dolor non fictus obvenerat, saccis opertæ, passis crinibus, et die noctuque turmatim incedentes, ancillarum præeunte multitudine, totam civitatem ululatu complebant, ad pulsata tympana cantu flebili respondentes." *Muratori*, Script. Rer. Italic. t. vii. p. 303.

choice of their poetical ornaments. In the best specimens of this school, we should find little to reward the labour of translating them ; and we feel still less inclined to draw the inferior pieces from their deserved obscurity. It is, therefore, principally with a view to the history of the language, and of the versification, that we turn over the pages of Ciullo d'Alcamo, the Sicilian ; those of Frederick the Second, and of his Chancellor, Pietro delle Vigne, of Oddo delle Colonne, of Mazzeo di Ricco, and of other poets of the same class.

The form of their versification was modelled upon that of the Provençals, or, perhaps, derived its origin from the same source as the latter. The verse was determined, not by the quantity, but by the accent of the syllables, and was always rhymed. Of all the feet employed by the ancients in the combination of syllables of different quantity, the iambic alone still continued in use ; five of them being comprised in the heroic verse, and three or four, in verses of a shorter measure. In the former, ten syllables were thus contained, exclusive of the mute ; of which the fourth, the eighth, and the tenth, or the sixth and the tenth, were accented. The rhymes were governed by the rules of the Provençals, and were, as in the poems of that country, intermingled in such a manner as to anticipate recurring terminations at certain passages of the poem, and by thus connecting the composition, to give it a stronger hold upon the memory. The piece was generally divided into stanzas or couplets, and the ear of the reader was taught to appreciate, not only the musical charm of each individual line, but the general harmony of the whole.

The language employed by the Sicilians in their poetical attempts, was not the popular dialect, as it then existed amongst the natives of the island, and as we still find it preserved in some Sicilian songs, scarcely intelligible to the Italians themselves. From the Imperial court, and that of the kings of Sicily, it had already received a more elegant form ; and those laws of grammar, which were originally founded upon custom, had now obtained the ascendancy over it, and prescribed their own rules. The *lingua cortigiana*, the language of the court, was already distinguished as the purest of the Italian dialects. In Tuscany, it came into general use ; and, previous to the end of the thirteenth century, it received great stability from several writers of

that country, in verse as well as in prose, who carried it very nearly to that degree of perfection which it has ever since maintained. For elegance and purity of style, Ricordano Malaspina, who wrote the History of Florence in 1280, may be pronounced, at the present day, to be in no degree inferior to the best writers now extant.

No poet, however, had yet arisen, gifted with absolute power over the empire of the soul; no philosopher had yet pierced into the depths of feeling and of thought; when Dante, the greatest name of Italy, and the father of her poetry, appeared, and demonstrated the mightiness of his genius, by availing himself of the rude and imperfect materials within his reach, to construct an edifice resembling, in magnificence, that universe whose image it reflects. Instead of amatory effusions, addressed to an imaginary beauty; instead of madrigals, full of sprightly insipidity, sonnets laboured into harmony, and strained or discordant allegories, the only models, in any modern language, which presented themselves to the notice of Dante; that great genius conceived, in his vast imagination, the mysteries of the invisible creation, and unveiled them to the eyes of the astonished world.

In the century immediately preceding, the energy of some bold and enthusiastic minds had been directed to religious objects. A new spiritual force, surpassing in activity and fanaticism, all monastic institutions before established, was organized by Saint Francis and Saint Dominick, whose furious harangues and bloody persecutions revived that zeal, which, for several centuries past, had appeared to slumber. In the cells of the monks, nevertheless, the first symptoms of reviving literature were seen. Their studies had now assumed a scholastic character. To the imagination of the zealot, the different conditions of a future state were continually present; and the spiritual objects, which he saw with the eyes of faith, were invested with all the reality of material forms, by the force with which they were presented to his view in detailed descriptions, and in dissertations displaying a scientific acquaintance with the exact limits of every torment, and the graduated rewards of glorification.

A very singular instance of the manner in which these ideas were impressed upon the people, is afforded by the native city of Dante, in which the celebration of a festival

was graced by a public representation of the infernal tortures; and it is not unlikely that the first circulation of the work of that poet gave occasion to this frightful exhibition. The bed of the Arno was converted into the gulf of perdition, where all the horrors, coined by the prolific fancy of the monks, were concentrated. Nothing was wanting to make the illusion complete; and the spectators shuddered at the shrieks and groans of real persons, apparently exposed to the alternate extremes of fire and frost, to waves of boiling pitch and to serpents.*

It appears, then, that when Dante adopted, as the subject of his immortal poem, the secrets of the invisible world, and the three kingdoms of the dead, he could not possibly have selected a more popular theme. It had the advantage of combining the most profound feelings of religion, with those vivid recollections of patriotic glory and party contentions, which were necessarily suggested by the re-appearance of the illustrious dead on this novel theatre. Such, in a word, was the magnificence of its scheme, that it may justly be considered as the most sublime conception of the human intellect.

At the close of the century, in the year 1300, and in the week of Easter, Dante supposes himself to be wandering in the deserts near Jerusalem, and to be favoured with the means of access to the realm of shadows. He is there met by Virgil, the object of his incessant study and admiration, who takes upon himself the office of guide, and who, by his own admirable description of the heathen hell, seems to have acquired a kind of right to reveal the mysteries of these forbidden regions. The two bards arrive at a gate, on which are inscribed these terrific words :—

> " Through me you pass into the city of woe:
> Through me you pass into eternal pain:
> Through me, among the people lost for aye.
> Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:
> To rear me was the task of power divine,
> Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.†

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* This seene occurred at Florence on the 1st May, 1804.

† The three persons of the blessed Trinity. The English versions of the extracts from Dante, are taken from Cary's Translation.

Before me things create were none, save things
Eternal, and eternal I endure.
All hope abandon, ye who enter here."*

By the decree of the Most High, the companions are, however, enabled to pass the gates of hell, and to penetrate into the dismal sojourn.

Here sighs, with lamentations and loud moans,
Resounded through the air, pierc'd by no star,
That e'en I wept at entering. Various tongues,
Horrible languages, outcries of woe,
Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,
With hands together smote that swelled the sounds,
Made up a tumult, that for ever whirls
Round through that air, with solid darkness stain'd,
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies. †

Notwithstanding their afflictions, these sufferers were not such as had been positively wicked, but such as, if they had lived without infamy, had yet no claims to virtue.

"This miserable fate
Suffer the wretched souls of those, who liv'd
Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious prov'd,
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth,
Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth
Of Hell receives them, lest th' accursed tribe
Should glory thence with exultation vain."
* * * * *
"Fame of them the world hath none,
Nor suffers: mercy and justice scorn them both.
Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by."‡

Leaving this ignoble multitude, the poets arrive at the gloomy banks of Acheron, where are assembled, from every

* *Inferno*, canto iii. v. 1.

Per me si va nella Città dolente:
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.
Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore:
Fece mi la divina potestate,
La somma sapienza e 'l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fur cose create
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro:
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate.

† *Inferno*, canto iii. v. 22. ‡ *Inferno*, canto iii. v. 34, &c.

part of the earth, such as have died in the displeasure of God. Divine justice pursues their steps, and terror, more powerful than desire, hurries them on. The reprobate souls are transported across the melancholy waters, in the boat of Charon ; for Dante, in common with many fathers of the church, under the supposition that paganism, in the person of its infernal Gods, represented the evil angels, made no scruple to adopt its fables. He thus blended with the terrors of the catholic faith, all the brilliant colouring of the Greek mythology, and all the force of poetical association. In his picture of the Last Judgment, Michael Angelo drew from Dante his ideas of hell. We there see Charon carrying over the condemned souls ; and forgetting that he is introduced, not as an infernal God, but as the evil spirit of the stream, it has been objected to the painter of the Sestine Chapel, that he has confounded the two religions, when, in fact, he has not transgressed the strict faith of the church.

The poets, proceeding into the depths of the regions of darkness, arrive at the abode of the wise and just of antiquity, who having been necessarily precluded, in their lives, from receiving the benefits of baptism, are condemned, by the catholic creed, to eternal pains. Their tears and groans are extorted, not by actual tortures, but by their eternal sense of the want of that bliss which they are destined never to attain. Their habitation is not unlike the shadowy Elysium of the poets, and affords a kind of fainter picture of earthly existence, where the place of hope is occupied by regret. We may here observe. that M. de Chateaubriand, after having expressed an inclination to exempt virtuous heathens from eternal punishment, has since experienced some scruples of conscience ; and in the third edition of his Martyrs, has penitently retracted a sentiment so pure, so benevolent, and so consistent with every attribute of a God of infinite goodness.

After surveying the heroes of antiquity, Dante, in his descent into the abyss, next encounters those whom love seduced into crime, and who died before they had repented of their sin ; for the distinction between Hell and Purgatory does not consist in the magnitude of the offence, but in the circumstances of the last moments of the offender. The first reprobate shades with which Dante meets, are treated with

the greatest share of indulgence, and the punishments become more intense, in proportion as he penetrates deeper into the bosom of hell.

Into a place I came
Where light was silent all. Bellowing, there groan'd
A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn
By warring winds. The stormy blast of hell
With restless fury drives the spirits on,
Whirl'd round and dash'd amain, with sore annoy.*

In the midst of this unhappy throng, Dante recognises Francesca di Rimini, daughter of Guido da Polenta, one of his patrons, who became the wife of Lancillotto Malatesti, and being detected in an adulterous intrigue with Paolo, her brother-in-law, was put to death by her husband. The reputation of this striking episode has made it familiar to every language; but the beauty and finished harmony of the original remain without a rival:

"Bard! willingly
I would address those two together coming,
Which seem so light before the wind." He thus:
"Note thou, when nearer they to us approach.
Then by that love which carries them along,
Entreat; and they will come." Soon as the wind
Sway'd them toward us, I thus fram'd my speech:
"O wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse
With us, if by none else restrain'd." As doves
By fond desire invited, on wide wings
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along;
Thus issu'd, from that troop where Dido ranks,
They, through the ill air speeding: with such force
My cry prevail'd, by strong affection urg'd.
"O gracious creature and benign! who go'st
Visiting, through this element obscure,
Us, who the world with bloody stain imbru'd;
If, for a friend, the King of all, we own'd,
Our pray'r to him should for thy peace arise,
Since thou hast pity on our evil plight.
Of whatsoe'er to hear or to discourse
It pleases thee, that will we hear, of that
Freely with thee discourse, while e'er the wind,
As now, is mute. The land, that gave me birth,
Is situate on the coast, where Po descends
To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.

* *Inferno*, canto v. v. 28.

"Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,
Entangled him by that fair form, from me
Ta'en in such cruel sort, as grieves me still:
Love, that denial takes from none belov'd,
Caught me with pleasing him so passing well,
That, as thou see'st, he yet deserts me not.
Love brought us to one death: Caina waits
The soul, who spilt our life."

After a pause, Dante exclaims:

"Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire
Must they at length to that ill pass have reach'd!"
Then turning, I to them my speech address'd,
And thus began: "Francesca! your sad fate
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.
But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how Love granted, that ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes?" She replied:
"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when mis'ry is at hand. That kens
Thy learn'd instructor. Yet so eagerly
If thou art bent to know the primal root,
From whence our love gat being, I will do
As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day,
For our delight we read of Lancelot,
How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
Suspicion near us. Oft times by that reading
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
The wished smile, so rapturously kiss'd
By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er
From me shall separate, at once my lips
All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both
Were love's purveyors.* In its leaves that day
We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,
The other wail'd so sorely, that heart-struck
I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.†

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* She refers to the seducer by the name of Gallehault, a friend of Lancelot, and the lover of one of the ladies of Genievre, who countenanced their passion.

† *Inferno*, canto v. v. 73. It has not been thought necessary, in every instance, to give these extracts in the Italian also, when the original is so easy of access. A portion, however, of this exquisite passage, the reader will, it is hoped, excuse us for here inserting:

Si tosto come l'vento a noi gli piega,
Muovo la voce: O anime affannate!
Venite a noi parlar, s' altri noi niega
Quali colombe dal disio chiamate,

Coll'

In the third circle of Hell,* whose capacious gulf is divided into seven concentric circles, Dante finds those who are punished for their gluttony. Extended upon the fetid mire, these wretches are eternally exposed to showers of ice. The poet is recognised by one of them, and receives from him tidings of several of his countrymen. The opposite vices of avarice and prodigality suffer a common punishment, in the fourth circle; the inhabitants of which attack each other with mutual reproaches.† A disgusting slough swallows up those who have abandoned themselves to their choleric passions;‡ and the heresiarchs have a place reserved for them, within the precincts of the city of Pluto.§ A number of tombs are scattered over a wide plain, partially open, and glowing like a heated furnace. From these, over which the coverings remain suspended, the most dreadful shrieks proceed. As he passes by one of the tombs, Dante is thus saluted by its tenant:

"O Tuscan! thou, who through the city of fire
Alive art passing, so discreet of speech;
Here, please thee, stay awhile. Thy utterance
Declares the place of thy nativity
To be that noble land, with which, perchance,
I too severely dealt."‖

The person who thus addresses him from the midst of the flames, proves to be Farinata de' Uberti, the chief of the Ghibeline faction at Florence, who triumphed over the Guelphs at the battle of Arbia, and saved his country, which

Coll' ali alzate e ferme, al dolce nido
Vengon per aere, da voler portate;
Cotali useir della schiera ov' è Dido,
A noi venendo per l' aere maligno;
Si forte fu l' affettuoso grido.
O animal grazioso e benigno,
Che visitando vai per l' aere perso
Noi, che tignemmo 'l mondo di sanguigne,
Se fosse amico il Re dell' universo,
Noi pregheremmo lui per la tua pace,
Da eh' hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.
Di quel ch' udire e che parlar ti piace,
Noi udiremo, e parleremo a vui.
Mentre che l' aura, come fà, si tace.

* *Inferno.* † *Ib.* canto vii. ‡ *Ib.* canto viii.
§ *Ib.* canto ix. ‖ *Ib.* canto x. v. 23.

the Ghibelines were about to sacrifice, to secure their own safety. Farinata was one of those great characters, of which antiquity, or the middle ages, alone, afford us any example. Controlling, with the hand of a master, the course of events, as well as the minds of men, destiny itself seems to submit to his will, and the very torments of hell are insufficient to disturb the haughty tranquillity of his spirit. He is admirably portrayed in the conversation which Dante has assigned to him. Every passion is concentrated in his attachment to his country and his party; and the exile of the Ghibelines inflicts upon him far greater torments than the burning couch upon which he is reposing.

On descending into the seventh circle, Dante perceives a vast pool of blood, into which tyrants and homicides are plunged. Centaurs, armed with darts, traverse its margin, and compel the wretches, who raise their heads above the surface, to hide them again in the bloody stream. Proceeding farther, he finds those who have committed suicide, suffering transformation into the shape of trees, and retaining nothing of their human character but the power of speech, and the sense of pain. As a punishment for having once turned their hands against themselves, they are deprived of all capacity of action. On a plain of scorching sand, and exposed to showers of fire, the poet finds a company of shades, whose disgraceful vices had incurred this penalty; but who, in many respects, were entitled to his affection and respect. Amongst these, he distinguishes Brunetto Latino, his instructor in eloquence and poetry; Guido Guerra, Jacopo Rusticucci, and Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, the most virtuous and disinterested republicans of Florence, in the preceding century. Dante observes:

> If from the fire
> I had been shelter'd, down amidst them straight
> I then had cast me; nor my guide, I deem,
> Would have restrain'd my going: but that fear
> Of the dire burning vanquish'd the desire,
> Which made me eager of their wish'd embrace.
> I then began:——
> "I am a countryman of yours, who still
> Affectionate have utter'd, and have heard,
> Your deeds and names renown'd."*

* *Inferno*, canto xvi. v. 47.

He proceeds to give them some intelligence of the affairs of Florence, in whose prosperity these victims of eternal torture still continue to take the deepest interest.

It is not our design to follow the steps of the poet from circle to circle, from gulf to "lower gulf." To render the description of these terrible scenes at all supportable, we must call to our aid the magical powers of style, and of verse; that vehement and picturesque genius, which places distinctly before our eyes the new world, summoned into being at the will of the poet. Above all, we cannot dispense with that interest in the personages introduced upon the scene, of which Dante availed himself, when, in anticipation of the Divine judgments, he described individuals well known to his fellow-citizens by their vices, and by the recent consequences of their crimes, as inhabiting the various mansions of hell, recognizing the Florentine bard, and losing, for a moment, the sense of their own agonies, in the remembrance of their country and their friends.

As this great work does not possess any regular action, and derives no support from the enthusiasm of human passion, it is impossible to take any lively interest in the hero of the story; if, indeed, Dante is not to be considered rather as the mere spectator of the pictures conjured up by his imagination, than as the hero of his own tale. It cannot, however, be said that the poem is altogether divested of dramatic interest. Unassisted and alone, we see Dante advance into the midst of demons and condemned souls. The Divine will has, it is true, opened to him the gates of Hell; and Virgil, who bears the mandate of Omnipotence, attends his steps. But the demons are not the less active in opposing, with their utmost malignity, the superior decrees of fate. At one time, they violently close the gates of Hell upon him; at another, they rush towards him, with the design of tearing him in pieces. They deceive him with false information, and endeavour to lead him astray in the infernal labyrinth. We are sufficiently absorbed in his narrative, to feel interested in the dangers to which he is perpetually exposed; and the truth of his descriptions, added to the deep horror inspired by the objects which he depicts, seldom fails to make a strong and painful impression on the mind. Thus, in the twenty-fifth canto, we shudder at the tortures, which he supposes to be inflicted

upon robbers. These miserable offenders inhabit a valley, filled with horrible serpents. Before the very face of Dante, one of these monsters springs upon Agnolo Brunellesehi, envelopes him in its folds, and pours its poisonous foam over his features. The two bodies soon appear to blend into one; the distinction of colours disappears; the limbs undergo a gradual change; and when they are disengaged, Brunelleschi is tranformed into a snake, and Cianfa, who had attacked him, recovers the human shape. Immediately after, Buoso de' Abbati is wounded by another serpent, which relinquishes its hold, and stretches itself out at his feet. Buoso fixes his eyes upon it, but eannot utter a word. He staggers and gasps, as if overpowered by lethargy or fever. The eyes of the man and of the reptile are steadfastly fixed on each other. From the wound of the former and the mouth of the latter, thick volumes of smoke proceed, and as soon as these unite, the nature of the two beings is changed. Arms are seen to issue from the body of the serpent, while the limbs of the man eontraet and disappear under the sealy figure of his adversary. While one ereets himself, the other grovels upon the earth; and the two aceursed souls, who have interchanged their punishments, separate with mutual execrations.

The general conception of this unknown world, whieh Dante has revealed to our eyes, is, eonsidered in itself, full of grandeur and sublimity. The existenee of the three kingdoms of the dead, in whieh the sufferings, at least, were all of a physical nature, and to which the language of scripture and of the fathers was always literally applied, was a point of faith which, at the time when the poet flourished, admitted of no dispute. The ereed of the church had not, however, fixed, with exact preeision, the different abodes of departed spirits, and it was diffieult to form an idea of the separation as well as of the degree of rewards and punishments. The future state described by the poets of antiquity is eonfused, and almost ineomprehensible. That of Dante, on the eontrary, strikes the imagination by the order, regularity, and grandeur with which it is depicted. It is impossible, when onee impressed with his conceptions, to figure his scenes to our fancy in any other form. A horrible abyss oeeupies the interior of our earth. The deelivity is not uniform, but broken, as it were, into steps, and terminates in the

centre of the globe. This is the kingly station of Lucifer, the despotic ruler of these realms of pain, who waves his six gigantic wings over a frozen ocean, in which he is half submerged, and is at once the servant and the victim of Almighty vengeance. Like him, the other spirits of darkness who espoused his cause, are incessantly employed in exercising their diabolical malignity on the reprobate souls, whose agonies they inflict and partake. From the centre of the earth, a long cavern reconducts the poet to the light of day. It opens at the base of a mountain, situated on the opposite hemisphere. In figure, this mountain is the exact reverse of the infernal regions. It forms an immense cone, divided into distinct departments, in which are distributed those souls who are undergoing the judgments of purgatory. Its avenues are guarded by angels; and whenever they permit a purified soul to ascend into heaven, the whole mountain rings with the joyous thanksgivings of its remaining inhabitants. On its summit, is situated the terrestrial Paradise, which forms the communicating link between heaven and earth. The celestial regions constitute the third portion of this universe, ascending in spiral rings, from sphere to sphere, to the throne of Almighty power. The same unity of design is thus visible in the conception of the different worlds; upon which the genius of Dante has conferred a diversified symmetry, combining, at once, perfect consistency with perpetual novelty, and approaching to that which characterizes the works of the creation.

The Divine Comedy is divided into a hundred cantos, each containing from one hundred and thirty, to one hundred and forty verses. The first canto is intended as a kind of introduction to the whole work. Thirty-three cantos are then devoted to each of the three topics of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Proceeding with our rapid sketch, we shall not at present particularize the terrific punishments which the poet contemplates in the ocean of ice, swept by the wings of Lucifer. Dante issues from the abyss by placing himself upon the body of the fiend, and at the same time revolving round the centre of the earth, towards which all matter gravitates. His position is then changed, and he ascends by the path which appeared to him to be a declivity. Emerging to the light of day, in the opposite hemisphere, he discovers a

vast ocean, in the midst of which is placed the steep mountain to which we have already alluded. After purifying himself from the infernal stains, Dante proceeds to attempt the spiral ascent, under the guidance of Virgil, who never forsakes his side. As he passes along, he sees the souls of the elect chastened by long and severe sufferings. But in the midst of their agonies, they are filled with holy raptures, having exchanged faith for certainty, and having always before their eyes those heavenly rewards, which they are destined at last to attain. The angels who guard the various districts of the mountain, or who visit it, in their robes of light, as messengers of the Supreme will, continually remind the sufferers that their temporary chastisement will be succeeded by the joys and the splendours of Paradise.

In this portion of the work, however, the interest is not equally supported. All apprehension of danger to the person of the hero is at an end. He walks in safety with the guardian angels of the place. There is little novelty in the punishments; and, such as they are, they do not strike the imagination, after those which we have already witnessed. Our sympathy, too, for the persons introduced to our notice, begins to languish. Their present state of existence is rendered indifferent to them by the vivacity of their hopes; their recollections of the past are absorbed in the future; and, experiencing no vehement emotions themselves, they have little power to excite them in us. Nor did this defect escape the observation of the poet. He endeavours to repair it, by entering into philosophical and theological discussions, and by detailing all the learning of the schools on the most subtle questions of metaphysics. But his style of argument, which was respected as profound at the period when he wrote, produces a very different effect upon minds which do not allow the authority of the doctors to supersede that of reason. These disquisitions, moreover, are always at variance with true poetry, and weary the reader, by interrupting the progress of the action.

Some interest is, however, occasionally excited by those whom Dante here encounters. Thus, on his first entrance into Purgatory, we are affected by the tender friendship of the musician, Casella, who endeavours to throw himself into the poet's arms. A striking incident occurs, also, in the third

canto, where he is accosted by Manfred, the natural son of Frederick, and the greatest prince who has filled the throne of the Two Sicilies. He enjoins Dante to seek his daughter Constance, wife of Peter the Third of Aragon, and mother of Frederick, the avenger of the Sicilians, for the purpose of satisfying her as to his doom, and dissipating the painful doubts which the Pope and the priesthood had excited. Not contented with persecuting him during his life, with defaming his character, and precipitating him from his throne, they took upon themselves to pronounce the sentence of his eternal damnation. His body was torn from the grave, and exposed on the banks of a river, as that of a rebellious and excommunicated son of the Church. Yet the Divinity, whose mercy is not as the mercy of man, had accepted him, pardoned him, and given him promise of an eternity of bliss; neither the maledictions of the priests, nor the imposing forms of excommunication, possessing power to deprive sinners of the benefits of infinite love. It was thus, that this singular poem might be said to convey tidings from parents to their children, and to afford grounds for hope, by giving, as it were, an authentic description of the state of the soul after dissolution.

In his sixth canto, Dante introduces us to the spirit of Sordello, the Troubadour of Mantua, of whom we have spoken in the fourth chapter. We behold him solitary, haughty, and contemptuous. He is recognized by Virgil, and the conference which ensues between them gives occasion to a fine invective against Italy, one of the most eloquent passages in the Purgatory. To enter, however, fully into the feelings of the poet, we must bear in mind the political storms by which Italy was, at that time, devastated; the long anarchy of the Empire, which, in the middle of the thirteenth century, had broken all the bonds by which its component states had before been united; the ambition of the Popes, who were only eager to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the ancient temporal sovereigns of the state; and the turbulent passions of the citizens, who continually sacrificed the liberty of their country to the indulgence of their private revenge. To all these sources of indignation, we must add the personal situation of Dante, then exiled from Florence by the triumphant faction of his enemies, and compelled to fly

for succour to the Emperors, who were then beginning to re-establish their authority in Germany, but were unable to direct their attention, in any considerable degree, to the affairs of Italy. The poet thus fervently apostrophizes his country:

> Ah, slavish Italy! thou inn of grief!
> Vessel, without a pilot, in loud storm!
> Lady no longer of fair provinces,
> But brothel-house impure! this gentle spirit,
> Ev'n from the pleasant sound of his dear land,
> Was prompt to greet a fellow-citizen
> With such glad cheer: while now thy living ones
> In thee abide not without war; and one
> Malicious gnaws another; ay! of those
> Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
> Seek, wretched one! around thy sea-coasts wide;
> Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,
> If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.
> What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand
> Refitted, if thy saddle be unpress'd?
> Nought doth he now but aggravate thy shame.——
> O German Albert! who abandon'st her
> That is grown savage and unmanageable,
> When thou should'st clasp her flanks with forked heels,
> Just judgment from the stars fall on thy blood;
> And be it strange and manifest to all;
> Such as may strike thy successor with dread;
> For that thy sire and thou have suffer'd thus,
> Through greediness of yonder realms detain'd,
> The garden of the empire to run waste.*

After having rebuked the Emperor for permitting the discord of the Ghibeline chiefs, the oppression of his noble partizans, and the desolation of Rome, he appeals to Providence against the universal confusion, which seems to contradict the scheme of its benevolence. He concludes with an address, conceived in a spirit of the bitterest irony, to his native country, in which he reproaches her with her ambition, with that inconstant temper which induces her to make perpetual alterations in her laws, her coinage, and her civil offices, and with the ostentatious and affected display of those virtues which she has long ceased to practise.

In the twentieth canto, and in the fifth circle of Purgatory, where the sin of avarice is expiated, Dante meets with Hugh Capet, father of the king of that name; and in the conversa-

* *Purgat.* canto vi. v. 76.

tion which takes place between them, the hatred which the poet entertains for the kings of France, who had extended their protection to his oppressors, and occasioned the downfall of his faction, is sufficiently manifest.

"I was root
Of that ill plant, whose shade such poison sheds
O'er all the Christian land, that seldom thence
Good fruit is gather'd. Vengeance soon should come,
Had Ghent and Douay, Lille and Bruges power;
And vengeance I of heav'n's great Judge implore.
Hugh Capet was I hight: from me descend
The Philips and the Louis, of whom France
Newly is govern'd; born of one, who ply'd
The slaughterer's trade at Paris. When the race
Of ancient kings had vanish'd (all save one
Wrapt up in sable weeds) within my gripe
I found the reins of empire, and such powers
Of new acquirement, with full store of friends,
That soon the widow'd circlet of the crown
Was girt upon the temples of my son,
He, from whose bones th' anointed race begins.
Till the great dower of Provence had remov'd
The stains, that yet obscur'd our lowly blood,
Its sway indeed was narrow; but howe'er
It wrought no evil: there, with force and lies
Began its rapine: after, for amends,
Poitou it seiz'd, Navarre and Gascony.
To Italy came Charles; and for amends,
Young Conradine, an innocent victim, slew;
And sent th' angelic teacher back to heaven,
Still for amends. I see the time at hand,
That forth from France invites another Charles
To make himself and kindred better known.
Unarm'd he issues, saving with that lance,
Which the arch-traitor tilted with; and that
He carries with so home a thrust, as rives
The bowels of poor Florence. No increase
Of territory hence, but sin and shame
Shall be his guerdon; and so much the more
As he more lightly deems of such foul wrong.
I see the other, (who a prisoner late
Had stept on shore,) exposing to the mart
His daughter, whom he bargains for, as do
The Corsairs for their slaves. O avarice!
What canst thou more, who hast subdued our blood
So wholly to thyself, they feel no care
Of their own flesh? To hide with direr guilt
Past ill and future, lo! the flower-de-luce
Enters Alagna; in his Vicar, Christ

Himself a captive, and his mockery
Acted again. Lo! to his holy lip
The vinegar and gall once more applied,
And he 'twixt living robbers doom'd to bleed." *

The Purgatory of Dante is, in some respects, a fainter picture of the infernal regions. The same crimes are there corrected by punishments of a similar nature, but limited in their duration, inasmuch as the sinner gave proofs of penitence previous to his death. Dante has, however, introduced much less variety into the offences and the penal inflictions. After remaining a considerable time with those souls which linger at the outside of Purgatory, as a punishment for having deferred, in their lifetime, the period of their conversion, he proceeds in regular order through the seven mortal sins. The proud are overwhelmed with enormous weights; the envious are clothed in garments of horsehair, and their eyelids are closed with an iron thread; clouds of smoke suffocate the choleric; the indolent are compelled to run without ceasing; the avaricious are prostrated with their faces on the earth; the cravings of hunger and thirst afflict the epicure; and those who have given themselves up to incontinence, expiate their crime in fire. It will appear, from this slight sketch, that the scene of the Purgatory is more contracted, and its action more tardy; and as Dante determined to make the Purgatory equal in length to the two other divisions of his work, the execution is perhaps necessarily languid. We find the cantos overloaded with visions and reveries, fatiguing to the reader, who looks forward with impatience to the termination of this mysterious excursion.

After having traversed the seven circles of Purgatory, Dante, in his twenty-eighth canto, reaches the terrestrial Paradise, situated on the summit of the mountain. His description of this place is full of beauty, and all that can be objected to it is, that he has too frequently digressed into scholastic dissertations. In this earthly Paradise, Beatrice, the object of his earliest affection, descends from heaven to meet him. She appears as the minister of grace, and the organ of divine wisdom; and the passion which he entertains for her, exists only in the noblest sentiments and in the most elevated feelings. It is only as a manifestation of the good

* *Purgat.* canto xx. v. 43.

ness of God, that she presents herself to his thoughts, after her translation to the skies. In this view, she occupies the first place in his poem. From her, Virgil received his orders to escort the bard on his journey; by her influence, the gates of Hell were opened before him; her care removed every obstacle which opposed his progress; and her mandates are implicitly obeyed, throughout the three kingdoms of the dead. Such is the glory with which her lover surrounds her, that we are sometimes inclined to suspect that she is merely an allegorical character, and that the individual object of his affections is lost in a personification of theology. Whilst she is advancing towards him, and whilst, even before he has recognized her, he already trembles in her presence, from the power of his first love. Virgil, who had hitherto accompanied him, disappears. Beatrice reproves the early errors of the poet, and attempts to purify his heart; but her discourse is, perhaps, not altogether equal to the situation. As Dante approaches nearer to Heaven, he aims at something beyond the ordinary language of the world; and, in this attempt, he frequently becomes so obscure, that it is difficult to detect the beauties which still remain. To give us an idea of the language of Heaven, he borrows that of the church; and he intersperses such a number of Latin verses and hymns in his poetry, that the difference between the prosody, sound, and turn of expression of the two languages, arrests, at every moment, the attention of the reader.

In ascending into Heaven, Dante no longer avails himself of human machinery or human power; and he is, therefore, transported thither by fixing his eyes steadfastly on the sun, and by the mere vehemence of his spiritual aspirations. It is here difficult to understand him; and whilst we are endeavouring to discover the meaning of his enigmatical words, we cease to sympathise with his feelings and to accompany him on his way. In his account of the infernal world, there is nothing supernatural, which is not in strict accordance with our own nature. He only exaggerates those forces and those evils of which we have real experience. When he issues from Purgatory and enters into Heaven, he presents us, on the contrary, with supernatural appearances like those of our wildest dreams. He supposes the existence of faculties, with which we have no acquaintance. He neither awakens our

associations, nor revives our habits. We never thoroughly understand him; and the perpetual state of astonishment in which we are placed, tends only to fatigue us.

The first abode of the blessed, is the heaven of the Moon, which revolves with the most tardy motion, and at the greatest distance from the glory of the Most High. Here inhabit the souls of such as, after having pronounced the vows of celibacy and religious seclusion, have been compelled to renounce them. But, although Dante distributes the beatified souls into distinct classes, their bliss, which is entirely of a contemplative nature, seems not to be susceptible of such a division. He represents one of those spirits as thus expressing himself:—

> "Brother! our will
> Is, in composure, settled by the power
> Of charity, who makes us will alone
> What we possess, and nought beyond desire:
> If we should wish to be exalted more,
> Then must our wishes jar with the high will
> Of him who sets us here."*

This may be very true; but the state of indifference, in which these souls exist, throws an air of coldness on the remainder of the poem; the interest of which is still farther impaired by frequent theological disquisitions. All the doubts of Dante, on the union of the body and the soul, on the nature of vows, on free will, and on other intricate points, are readily solved by Beatrice; but it is not so easy to satisfy the minds of his readers on these obscure topics. The most philosophical prose is not always successful on these subjects; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised, if the poetical form of Dante's arguments, and the authority of Beatrice, to whose divine mission we are not always disposed to give implicit faith, throw still greater obscurity over questions, which are beyond all human comprehension.

We find very few descriptions in the Paradise of Dante. The great artist, whose sketches of the infernal realms possess such appalling sublimity, has not attempted to delineate the scenery of the skies. We leave the heaven of the Moon, with a very imperfect knowledge of its nature; and our visit to that of Mercury is no less unsatisfactory. In each suc

* *Parad.* canto iii. v. 70.

cessive kingdom, however, the poet excites our curiosity, by assigning a prominent station to some character of distinguished celebrity. In the sixth canto, and in the second heaven, he is accosted by the Emperor Justinian, who is represented in a light as favourable as that in which the civilians have always delighted to view the great father of their science, and very different from that in which he is exhibited, with all his frailties and his vices, in the Secret History of Procopius.

In the third heaven, which is that of the planet Venus, Dante meets with Cunissa, the sister of Azzolino da Romano, who forewarns him of the revolutions of the Marca Trivigiana. Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventura are found in the fourth heaven, which is placed in the Sun ; and they narrate the glorified actions of Saint Dominick and Saint Francis. The souls of those who have combated for the true faith, are rewarded in the heaven of Mars. Amongst these, he observes his ancestor, Cacciaguida de' Elisei, who perished in the crusades ; and from whom he receives an account of the early greatness of his own family. Cacciaguida proceeds to describe the ancient severity of manners maintained in Florence, in the time of Conrad the Third, and gives a catalogue, with a few characteristic remarks, of the noble houses which then flourished ; of those which had, in later times, fallen into decay, and of those which had more recently risen to distinction. He then predicts to Dante his approaching exile :

> " Thou shalt leave each thing
> Belov'd most dearly : this is the first shaft
> Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
> How salt the savour is of others' bread ;
> How hard the passage, to descend and climb
> By others' stairs. But that shall gall thee most,
> Will be the worthless and vile company,
> With whom thou must be thrown into these straits."*

Cacciaguida then encourages Dante to disclose to the world all that he has witnessed in the realm of shadows, and to elevate his mind above the unworthy apprehension of giving offence to those, who might deem themselves disgraced by his narrations.

* *Parad.* canto xvii. v. 55.

The sixth heaven is that of Jupiter, in which those who have administered justice with impartiality, receive their reward. The seventh is in Saturn, and contains such as devoted themselves to a life of contemplation or seclusion. In the eighth heaven, Dante beholds the triumph of Christ, which is attended by a host of beatified souls and by the Virgin Mary herself. He is then examined by Saint Peter in point of faith, by Saint James in hope, and by Saint John in charity, from all of whom he obtains honourable testimonials of their approbation. Adam, also, here informs him what language was spoken in the terrestrial Paradise.

The poet then ascends into the ninth sphere, where he is favoured with a manifestation of the Divine Essence, which is, however, veiled by three hierarchies of surrounding angels. The Virgin Mary, and the Saints of the Old and New Testament, are also visible to him in the tenth heaven. All his doubts are finally resolved by the saints or by the Deity himself; and this great work concludes with a contemplation of the union of the two natures in the Divine Being.

The measure in which this poem is written, and of which Dante was, in all probability, the original inventor, has received the name of *terza rima*. It has since been especially appropriated to philosophical poetry, to satires, and to epistolary and allegorical compositions. But it is applicable, with no less success, to epic poetry. The position of the recurring rhymes keeps the attention alive, and admits of a regular flow of the narrative ; an advantage, to which the *ottava rima*, or stanza of the later Italian writers, and even the *quatrains* of French poetry, cannot lay claim. The *terza rima* consists of three verses, disposed in such a manner, that the middle line of each couplet rhymes with the first and third verses of the succeeding. From the way in which the lines are thus perpetually interwoven, the memory derives very material assistance. Whatever couplet we may select from the poem, will afford us, by two of its rhymes, a clue to the preceding passage, and by one of them, to the following couplet. The verses, thus interlinked, are all endecasyllables, which are exclusively used in the epic poetry of Italy ; and they are divided, or supposed so to be, into five iambics, of which the last is followed by a short syllable.

As a specimen of the *terza rima*, I have attempted to translate into French verse the celebrated Episode of Ugolino from the thirty-third canto of the *Inferno*. In this I have found very great difficulty. The French language, compared with the Italian, is very poor in rhymes, which are not easily found for three verses, placed at a regular and invariable distance. The rule which compels the French writer not to employ two feminine rhymes in succession, and which is not observed in Italian composition, presents an additional obstacle. It may, perhaps, also be said, that the French language has a natural tendency, in its versification, to the use of the couplet, and that a continued union of rhyme is as repugnant to its genius as the running of one line into another. If not absolutely insurmountable, the constraint imposed by these various difficulties, is, at least, such, as almost to destroy the magnificent spirit of the celebrated passage in question. In the last circle of the infernal world, Dante beholds those who have betrayed their native land, entombed in everlasting ice. Two heads, not far distant from each other, raise themselves above the frozen surface. One of these is that of Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, who, by a series of treasons, had made himself absolute master of Pisa. The other head is that of Ruggeiri de' Ubaldini, archbishop of that state, who, by means not less criminal, had effected the ruin of the count, and having seized him, with his four children, or grandchildren, had left them to perish, by famine, in prison. Dante does not at first recognize them, and shudders when he sees Ugolino gnawing the skull of his murderer, which lies before him. He inquires into the motive of this savage enmity, and with the count's reply the thirty-third canto commences.*

* *Inferno*, Canto xxxiii. v. 1. [As the object of M. Sismondi is to shew the peculiarities of the *terza rima*, and to try how far its adoption is practicable in French versification, it has been thought expedient to present the reader with his version below; the perusal of which will probably convince him, that the objections stated by that gentleman are not overcharged. Without detracting from the spirit and ingenuity with which he has executed his laborious task, it is not too much to say, that the admirer of the unequalled original will turn with pleasure, heightened by the contrast, to the excellent translation of this episode by Mr. Cary.

Disclaiming any intention of entering into competition with either of these versions, the editor has ventured to attempt an original translation, in which he has preserved, in the English, the form of the Italian

His mouth upraising from his hideous feast,
And brushing, with his victim's locks, the spray
Of gore from his foul lips, that sinner ceas'd:
Then thus: "Will'st thou that I renew the sway
Of hopeless grief, which weighs upon my heart
In thought, ere yet my tongue that thought betray?
But, should my words prove seeds from which may start
Ripe fruits of scorn for him, whose traitor head
I gnaw, then words and tears, at once, shall part.

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terza rima, and has adhered as literally as possible, and line for line, to the original. This species of verse is certainly difficult in our own language, to which, however, it is much more congenial than to the French. It has been employed with considerable success by Lord Byron, in his Prophecy of Dante, where the reader will be enabled fully to estimate all that it is capable of effecting in our language. *Tr.*]

Ce pécheur, soulevant une bouche altérée,
Essuya le sang noir dont il était trempé,
A la tête de mort qu'il avait dévorée.
Si je dois raconter le sort qui m'a frappé,
Une horrible douleur occupe ma pensée,
Dit-il, mais ton espoir ne sera point trompé.
Qu'importe ma douleur, si ma langue glacée,
Du traître que tu vois comble le déshonneur,
Ma langue se ranime, à sa honte empressée.
Je ne te connais point, je ne sais quel bonheur
Te conduit tout vivant jusqu'au fond de l'abîme;
N'es-tu pas Florentin? vois, et frémis d'horreur!
Mon nom est Ugolin, Roger est ma victime;
Dieu livre à mes fureurs le prélat des Pisans;
Sans doute tu connais et mon sort et son crime:
Je mourus par son ordre avec tous mes enfans;
Déjà la renommée aura pu t'en instruire;
Mais elle n'a point dit quels furent mes tourmens.
Ecoute, et tu verras si Roger sut me nuire.
Dans la tour de la Faim, où je fus enfermé,
Où maint infortuné doit encor se détruire,
Le flambeau de la nuit plusieurs fois rallumé,
M'avait de plusieurs mois fait mesurer l'espace,
Quand d'un songe cruel mon cœur fut alarmé.
Vieux tyran des forêts, on me force à la chasse;
Cet homme, avec Gualande et Sismonde, et Lanfranc,
Changés en chiens cruels, se pressaient sur ma trace,
Je fuyais vers les monts l'ennemi de mon sang;
Mes jeunes louvetaux ne pouvaient plus me suivre,
Et ces chiens dévorans leur déchiraient le flanc.
De ce songe un réveil plus affreux me délivre;
Mes fils dans leur sommeil me demandaient du pain,
Un noir pressentiment paraissait les poursuivre.
Et toi, si, prévoyant mon funeste destin,

Tu'

I know thee not; nor by what fortune led
Thou wanderest here; but thou, if true the claim
Of native speech, wert in fair Florence bred.
Know, then, Count Ugolino is my name,
And this the Pisan prelate at my side,
Ruggier.—Hear, now, my cause of grief—his shame.
That by his arts he won me to confide
In his smooth words. that I was bound in chains,
Small need is, now, to tell, nor that I died.

Tu t'abstiens, étranger, de répandre des larmes,
Aurais-tu dans ton cœur quelque chose d'humain ?
Mes fils ne dormaient plus ; mais de sombres alarmes
Avaient glacé leurs sens ; le geôlier attendu
N'apportait point ce pain que nous trempions de larmes.
Tout à coup des verroux le bruit est entendu,
Notre fatale tour est pour jamais fermée :
Je regarde mes fils, et demeure éperdu.
Sur mes lèvres la voix meurt à demi formée ;
Je ne pouvais pleurer : ils pleuraient, mes enfans !
Quelle haine par eux n'eût été désarmée ?
Anselme, me serrant dans ses bras caressans,
S'écriait : que crains-tu, qu'as-tu donc, ô mon père !
Je ne te connais plus sous tes traits pâlissans.
Cependant aucuns pleurs ne mouillaient ma paupière,
Je na répondais point ; je me tus tout un jour.
Quand un nouveau soleil éclaira l'hémisphère,
Quand son pâle rayon pénétra dans la tour,
Je lus tous mes tourmens sur ces quatre visages,
Et je rongeai mes poings, sans espoir de secour.
Mes fils, trompés sans doute à ces gestes sauvages,
D'une féroce faim me crurent consumé.
Mon père, dirent-ils, suspendez ces outrages !
Par vous, de votre sang notre corps fut formé,
Il est à vous, prenez, prolongez votre vie ;
Puisse-t-il vous nourrir, ô père bien aimé !
Je me tus, notre force était anéantie !
Ce jour ni le suivant nous ne pûmes parler :
Que ne t'abîmais-tu, terre notre ennemie !
Déjà nous avions vu quatre soleils briller,
Lorsque Gaddo tomba renversé sur la terre.
Mon père, cria-t-il, ne peux-tu me sauver !
Il y mourut. Ainsi que tu vois ma misère,
Je les vis tous mourir, l'un sur l'autre entassés,
Et je demeurai seul, maudissant la lumière.
Trois jours, entre mes bras leurs corps furens pressés ;
Aveuglé de douleur, les appelant encore,
Trois jours je réchauffai ces cadavres glacés,
Puis la faim triompha du deuil qui me dévore.

But what is yet untold, unheard, remains.
And thou shalt hear it—by what fearful fate
I perish'd. Judge, if he deserves his pains.
When, in those dungeon-walls emmew'd, whose gate
Shall close on future victims, called the Tower
Of Famine, from my pangs, the narrow grate
Had shewn me several moons, in evil hour
I slept and dream'd, and our impending grief
Was all unveil'd by that dread vision's power.
This wretch, methought, I saw, as lord and chief,
Hunting the wolf and cubs, upon that hill
Which makes the Pisan's view towards Lucca brief.
With high-bred hounds, and lean, and keen to kill,
Gualandi, with Sismondi, in the race
Of death, were foremost, with Lanfranchi, still.
Weary and spent appear'd, after short chace,
The sire and sons, and soon, it seem'd, were rent
With sharpest fangs, their sides. Before the trace
Of dawn, I woke, and heard my sons lament,
(For they were with me), mourning in their sleep,
And craving bread. Right cruel is thy bent,
If, hearing this, no horror o'er thee creep;
If, guessing what I now began to dread,
Thou weep'st not, wherefore art thou wont to weep?
Now were they all awake. The hour, when bread
Was wont to be bestow'd, had now drawn near,
And dismal doubts, in each, his dream had bred.
Then lock'd, below, the portals did we hear
Of that most horrible Tower. I fix'd my eye,
Without one word, upon my children dear:
Harden'd like rock within, I heav'd no sigh.
They wept; and then I heard my Anselm say,
'Thou look'st so, Sire! what ails thee?' No reply
I utter'd yet, nor wept I, all that day,
Nor the succeeding night, till on the gloom
Another sun had issued. When his ray
Had scantily illum'd our prison-room,
And in four haggard visages I saw
My own shrunk aspect, and our common doom,
Both hands, for very anguish, did I gnaw.
They, thinking that I tore them through desire
Of food, rose sudden from their dungeon-straw,
And spoke: 'Less grief it were, of us, O Sire!
If thou would'st eat—These limbs, thou, by our birth
Didst clothe—Despoil them now, if need require.'
Not to increase their pangs of grief and dearth,
I calm'd me. Two days more, all mute we stood:
Wherefore didst thou not open, pitiless Earth!
Now, when our fourth sad morning was renew'd,
Gaddo fell at my feet, outstretch'd and cold,
Crying, 'Wilt thou not, father! give me food?'

There did he die; and as thine eyes behold
Me now, so saw I three, fall one by one,
On the fifth day and sixth: whence, in that hold,
I, now grown blind, over each lifeless son,
Stretch'd forth mine arms. Three days, I call'd their names
Then Fast achiev'd what Grief not yet had done."

CHAPTER X.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF DANTE OVER HIS AGE.—PETRARCH.

THE power of the human mind was never more forcibly demonstrated, in its most exquisite masterpieces, than in the poem of Dante. Without a prototype in any existing language, equally novel in its various parts, and in the combination of the whole, it stands alone, as the first monument of modern genius, the first great work which appeared in the reviving literature of Europe. In its composition, it is strictly conformable to the essential and invariable principles of the poetical art. It possesses unity of design and of execution; and bears the visible impress of a mighty genius, capable of embracing, at once, the parts and the whole of its scheme; of employing, with facility, the most stupendous materials, and of observing all the required niceties of proportion, without experiencing any difficulty from the constraint. In all other respects, the poem of Dante is not within the jurisdiction of established rules. It cannot with propriety be referred to any particular class of composition, and its author is only to be judged by those laws which he thought fit to impose upon himself. His modesty induced him to give his work the title of a *Comedy*, in order to place it in a rank inferior to the Epic, to which he conceived that Virgil had exclusive claims. Dante had not the slightest acquaintance with the dramatic art, of which he had, in all probability, never met with a single specimen; and from this ignorance proceeded that use of the word, which now appears to us to be so extraordinary.* In his native country, the title which he gave to his

* [Mr. Cary observes, in his preface, "Dante himself, I believe, termed it simply *The Comedy*, in the first place, because the style was of the middle kind; and in the next, because the story (if story it may be called) ends happily."—*Tr.*]

work was always preserved, and it is still known as *The Divine Comedy*. A name so totally different from every other, seems to be happily bestowed upon a production which stands without a rival.

The glory which Dante acquired, which commenced during his lifetime, and which raised him, in a little time, above the greatest names of Italy, contributed but little to his happiness. He was born in Florence, in 1265, of the noble and distinguished family of the Alighieri, which was attached, in politics, to the party of the Guelphs. Whilst yet very young, he formed a strong attachment to Beatrice, the daughter of Folco de' Portinari, whom he lost at the age of twenty-five years. Throughout his future life, he preserved a faithful recollection of the passion, which, during fifteen years, had essentially contributed to the happy developement of his feelings, and which was thus associated with all his noblest sentiments and his most elevated thoughts. It was, probably, about ten years after the death of Beatrice, when Dante commenced his great work, which occupied him during the remainder of his life, and in which he assigned the most conspicuous station to the woman whom he had so tenderly loved. In this object of his adoration, he found a common point of union for images both human and divine; and the Beatrice of his Paradise appears to us sometimes in the character of the most beloved of her sex, and sometimes as an abstract emblem of celestial wisdom. Far from considering the passion of love in the same light as the ancients, the father of modern poetry recognizes it as a pure, elevated, and sacred sentiment, calculated to ennoble and to sanctify the soul; and he has never been surpassed, by any who have succeeded him, in his entire and affecting devotion to the object of his attachment. Dante was, however, induced by considerations of family convenience, to enter into a new engagement. In 1291, a year after the death of Beatrice, he married Gemma de' Donati, whose obstinate and violent disposition embittered his domestic life. It is remarkable that, in the whole course of his work, into which he introduces the whole universe, he makes no personal allusion to his wife; and he was actuated, no doubt, by motives of delicacy towards her and her family, when he passed over, in similar silence, Corso Donati, the leader of the faction of his enemies, and his own most for-

midable adversary. In the battle of Campaldino, in 1289, Dante bore arms for his country against the Aretini, and, also, against the Pisans, in the campaign of 1290; the year subsequent to that in which the catastrophe of Count Ugolino occurred. He subsequently assumed the magisterial functions, at the period so fatal to the happiness of his country when the civil wars, between the Bianchi and the Neri, broke out. He was accused of a criminal partiality to the interest of the former faction, during the time when he was a member of the Supreme Council; and when Charles de Valois, the father of Philip the Sixth, proceeded to Florence, to appease the dissensions of the two parties, Dante was sentenced, in the year 1302, to the payment of an oppressive fine and to exile. By the subsequent sentence of a revolutionary tribunal, he was condemned, during his absence, to be burned alive, with all his partizans. From that period, Dante was compelled to seek an asylum at such of the Italian courts as were attached to the Ghibeline interest, and were not unwilling to extend their protection to their ancient enemies. To that party, which he had opposed in the outset of his career, his perpetual exile and his misfortunes compelled him, ultimately, to become a convert. He resided, for a considerable time, with the Marquis Malaspina, in the Lunigiana, with the Count Busone da Gubbio, and with the two brothers, Della Scala, Lords of Verona. But, in every quarter, the haughty obstinacy of his character, which became more inflexible in proportion to the difficulties with which he was surrounded, and the bitterness of his wit, which frequently broke out into caustic sarcasms, raised up against him new enemies. His attempts to re-enter Florence with his party, by force of arms, were successively foiled; his petitions to the people were rejected; and his last hope, in the Emperor Henry the Seventh, vanished on the death of that monarch. His decease took place at Ravenna, on the 14th of September, 1321, whilst he was enjoying the hospitable protection of Guido Novello da Polenta, the lord of that city, who had always treated him rather as a friend than as a dependant, and who, a short time before, had bestowed upon him an honourable mark of his confidence, by charging him with an embassy to the Republic of Venice.

On the death of her great poet, all Italy appeared to go

into mourning. On every side, copies of his work were multiplied, and enriched with numerous commentaries.* In the year 1350, Giovanni Visconti, Archbishop and Prince of Milan, engaged a number of learned men in the laborious task of illustrating and explaining the obscure passages of the *Divina Comedia.* Six distinguished scholars, two theologians, two men of science, and two Florentine antiquaries, united their talents in this undertaking. Two professorships were instituted for the purpose of expounding the works of Dante. One of these, founded at Florence, in the year 1373, was filled by the celebrated Boccaccio. The duties of the other, at Bologna, were no less worthily discharged by Benvenuto d'Imola, a scholar of eminence. It is questionable whether any other man ever exercised so undisputed an authority, and so direct an influence, over the age immediately succeeding his own.

An additional proof of the superiority of this great genius, may be drawn from the commentaries upon his works. We are there surprised to see his most enthusiastic admirers incapable of appreciating his real grandeur. Dante himself, in his Latin treatise, entitled *De Vulgari Eloquentiâ*, appears to be quite unconscious of the extent of his services to the literature of his country. Like his commentators, he principally values himself upon the purity and correctness of his style. Yet he is neither pure nor correct; but, what is far superior to either, he had the powers of creative invention. For the sake of the rhyme, we find him employing a great number of barbarous words, which do not occur a second time in his verses. But, when he is himself affected, and

* A man of singular genius (Ugo Foscolo), who published a new edition of the Divine Comedy, attempted to prove that Dante did not make public his poem during his lifetime, and had no intention of doing so. There can be no doubt that he continued to retouch it up to the close of his existence, and to introduce alterations and additions, and that he kept back those passages calculated to exasperate his enemies; but the productions of a great man are half known even when he has not finally promulgated them; and, previous to the invention of printing, there could be no such thing as complete publicity. We are not aware what portions of his poem Dante may have recited to his different hosts, what copies or what fragments of copy he may have given to them. We see in Voltaire's correspondence what an effect was produced, long previous to its publication, by a poem which it was his object to conceal; why should Dante have observed greater mystery about his?

wishes to communicate his emotions, the Italian language of the thirteenth century, in his powerful hands, displays a richness of expression, a purity, and an elegance, which he was the first to elicit, and by which it has ever since been distinguished. The personages whom he introduces, are moving and breathing beings; his pictures are nature itself; his language speaks at once to the imagination and to the judgment; and it would be difficult to point out a passage in his poem, which would not form a subject for the pencil. The admiration of his commentators has, also, been abundantly bestowed upon the profound learning of Dante; who, it must be allowed, appears to have been master of all the knowledge and accomplishments of the age in which he lived. Of these various attainments, his poem is the faithful depository, from which we may infer, with great precision, the progress which science had, at that time, made, and the advances which were yet necessary, to afford full satisfaction to the mind.

It would here become our duty to take a summary view of the poets, who flourished contemporaneously with Dante, and who either adopted him as their model, or pursued the path already opened by the Provençal writers. In this object, however, we have been anticipated by M. Ginguené, in his excellent *History of Italian Literature*. In speaking of the great prototypes of literature, with which I am myself acquainted, and which I have studied with enthusiasm, I express the opinions which are the result of my own ideas and sentiments. In every individual, opinions, thus formed, will possess a certain degree of novelty and peculiarity; and so far, the field lies as open to one critic as to another. But in treating of those authors who hold only a secondary rank, of whom I have only a very partial knowledge, and that knowledge, in some instances, acquired from M. Ginguené himself, I cannot, for a moment, hesitate in referring the reader, for complete information on this head, to the labours of that distinguished writer, who has devoted his whole life to the study of Italian literature, and whose correct and elegant taste, added to his learning, as extensive as it is accurate, have deservedly given to his work universal circulation and applause.

From this source, then, the reader will derive more ample information respecting Jacopone di Todi; of whom we shall only here observe, that he was a monk, who was induced, by

motives of humility, to assume the outward appearances of insanity. He was fond of being insulted by children, and followed in the streets. During many years, he was persecuted by his superiors, and languished in confinement; where, however, amidst all his miseries, he composed religious hymns, which are not deficient in transports of enthusiasm, but which are frequently rendered quite unintelligible by the subtleties of mystical sentiment. To the same period, belongs Francesco di Barberino, the disciple, like Dante, of Brunetto Latini, and author of a treatise, in verse, on moral philosophy, which, in conformity with the affected spirit of the times, he entitled *I Documenti d'Amore*. Cecco d'Ascoli was also the contemporary of Dante, and his personal enemy. His poem, in five books, called *L'Acerba*, or rather, according to M. Ginguené, *L'Acerva*, the heap, is a collection of all the sciences of his age, including astronomy, philosophy, and religion. It is much less remarkable for its intrinsic merit, than for the lamentable catastrophe of its author, who was burned alive, in Florence, as a sorcerer, in 1327, at the age of seventy years, after having long held the professorship of judicial astrology in the University of Bologna. Cino da Pistoia, of the house of the Sinibaldi, was the friend of Dante, and was equally distinguished by the brilliancy of his talents in two different departments: as a lawyer, by his commentary on the nine first books of the Code, and, as a poet, by his verses addressed to the beautiful Selvaggia de' Vergiolesi, of whom he was deprived by death, about the year 1307. As a lawyer, he was the preceptor of the celebrated Bartolo, who, if he has surpassed his master, yet owed much to his lessons. As a poet, he was the model which Petrarch loved to imitate; and, in this view, he, perhaps, did his imitator as much injury by his refinement and affectation, as he benefited him by the example of his pure and harmonious style. Fazio de' Uberti, grandson of the great Farinata, and who, in consequence of the hatred which the Florentines entertained for his ancestor, lived and died in exile, raised himself to equal celebrity, at this period, by his sonnets and other verses. At a much later time of life, he composed a poem, of the descriptive kind, entitled *Dettamondo*, in which he proposed to imitate Dante, and to display the real world, as that poet had portrayed the world of spirits. But it need hardly be said,

that the distance between the original and the imitation is great indeed.

In some respects, all these poets, and many others, whose names are yet more obscure, have common points of resemblance. We find, in all, the same subtlety of idea, the same incoherent images, and the same perplexed sentiments. The spirit of the times was perverted by an affected refinement; and it is a subject of just surprise, that, in the very outset of a nation, simplicity and natural feeling should have been superseded by conceit and bombast. It is, however, to be considered, that this nation did not form her own taste, but adopted that of a foreign country, before she was qualified, by her own improved knowledge, to make a proper choice. The verses of the Troubadours of Provence were circulated from one end of Italy to the other. They were diligently perused and committed to memory by every poet who aspired to public notice, some of whom exercised themselves in compositions in the same language; and although the Italians, if we except the Sicilians, had never any direct intercourse with the Arabians, yet they derived much information from them by this circuitous route. The almost unintelligible subtleties with which they treated of love, passed for refinement of sentiment; while the perpetual rivalry which was maintained between the heart and the head, between reason and passion, was looked upon as an ingenious application of philosophy to a literary subject. The causeless griefs, the languors, the dying complaints of a lover, became a constituent portion of the consecrated language in which he addressed his mistress, and from which he could not, without impropriety, depart. Conventional feelings in poetry, thus usurped the place of those native and simple sentiments which are the offspring of the heart. But, instead of dwelling upon these defects in the less celebrated poets, we shall attempt to exhibit the general spirit of the fourteenth century, as displayed in the works of the greatest man whom Italy, in that age, produced, whose reputation has been most widely spread, and whose influence has been most extensively felt, not only in Italy, but in France, in Spain, and in Portugal. The reader will easily imagine that it is Petrarch. the lover of Laura, to whom we here allude.

Petrarch was the son of a Florentine, who like Dante, had

been exiled from his native city. He was born at Arezzo, on the night of the nineteenth of July, 1304, and he died at Arqua, near Padua, on the eighteenth of July, 1374. During the century, of which his life occupied the greater portion, he was the centre of Italian literature. Passionately attached to letters, and more especially to history and to poetry, and an enthusiastic admirer of antiquity, he imparted to his contemporaries, by his discourses, his writings, and his example, that taste for the recovery and study of Latin manuscripts, which so eminently distinguished the fourteenth century; which preserved the masterpieces of the classical authors, at the very moment when they were about to be lost for ever; and gave a new impulse, by the imitation of those admirable models, to the progress of the human intellect. Petrarch, tortured by the passion which has contributed so greatly to his celebrity, endeavoured, by travelling, during a considerable portion of his life, to escape from himself and to change the current of his thoughts. He traversed France, Germany, and every part of Italy; he visited Spain; and, with incessant activity, directed his attention to the examination of the remains of antiquity. He became intimate with all the scholars, poets, and philosophers, from one end of Europe to the other, whom he inspired with his own spirit. While he imparted to them the object of his own labours, he directed their studies; and his correspondence became a sort of magical bond, which, for the first time, united the whole literary republic of Europe. At the age in which he lived, that continent was divided into petty states, and sovereigns had not yet attempted to establish any of those colossal empires, so dreaded by other nations. On the contrary, each country was divided into smaller sovereignties. The authority of many a prince did not extend above thirty leagues from the little town over which he ruled; while at the distance of a hundred, his name was unknown. In proportion, however, as political importance was confined, literary glory was extended; and Petrarch, the friend of Azzo di Corregio, Prince of Parma, of Luchino, and of Galeazzo Visconti, Princes of Milan, and of Francesco di Carrara, Prince of Padua, was better known and more respected, throughout Europe, than any of those petty sovereigns. This universal reputation, to which his

high acquirements entitled him, and of which he frequently made use, in forwarding the interests of literature, he occasionally turned to account, for political purposes. No man of letters, no poet, was, doubtless, ever charged with so many embassies to great potentates ; to the Emperor, the Pope, the King of France, the senate of Venice, and all the Princes of Italy. It is very remarkable that Petrarch did not fulfil these duties merely as a subject of the state which had committed its interests to his hands, but that he acted for the benefit of all Europe. He was entrusted with such missions, on account of his reputation ; and when he treated with the different princes, it was, as it were, in the character of an arbitrator, whose suffrage every one was eager to obtain, that he might stand high in the opinion of posterity.

The prodigious labours of Petrarch to promote the study of ancient literature, are, after all, his noblest title to glory. Such was the view in which they were regarded by the age in which he lived, and such also was his own opinion. His celebrity, notwithstanding, at the present day, depends much more on his Italian lyrical poems, than on his voluminous Latin compositions. These lyrical pieces, which were imitated from the Provençals, from Cino da Pistoia, and from the other poets who flourished at the commencement of that century, have served, in their turn, as models to all the distinguished poets of the South. I would gladly make my readers acquainted with some of these poems, if, in my translations, any of those beauties which so essentially depend upon the harmony and colouring of their most musical and picturesque language, could possibly be preserved.

The lyrical style of poetry is the first which is cultivated in every language, on the revival of its literature ; for it is that which is most essentially poetical, and in which the poet can abandon himself most freely to his vivid impressions. In an epic poem, the author never ceases to think of his readers. His object is to give a faithful narrative, and to present to their eyes events, in which he can have no personal interest. In the drama, he absolutely loses his identity, and transforms himself into the various persons whom he creates. In the pastoral, it is true, he has an opportunity for the expression of sentiment, but it is not his own ; and he is forced to accommodate himself to conventional notions,

and to an ideal mode of life. The lyrical poet, on the contrary, is ever himself; he expresses, in his own person, his own peculiar emotions; he sings because he is affected, because he is inspired. Poetry, which is addressed to others, and the object of which is persuasion, should borrow its ornaments from eloquence; but, when it is an effusion of the heart, an overflow of sentiment, its true embellishment is harmony. The ordinary measure of verse is insufficient for the heart which would pour out its feelings, and delight in comtemplating them. The verses must be accompanied by music, or by the regular return of the stanza, the natural harmony of language. Verses, which follow one another without being musically disposed, do not seem sufficiently poetical to express the feelings of the writer; and he discovers, by the ear alone, new rules, the observation of which may render the harmonious pleasure more complete.

The ode, in the form in which it existed amongst the ancients, and as it is to be found in the works of many of the poets of Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, is the most perfect model of the lyrical style. The French have retained the same form. Their stanza is sufficiently musical; and the indeterminate length of the poem, and the regularity of each stanza, admit of that mixture of freedom and constraint which the expression of sentiment requires. The short French verse, which is not generally suspected to consist of regular feet, is always composed of long and short syllables, distributed in an harmonious order, and, at least in the hands of ingenious poets, has a good effect upon the ear. Inspiration, however, is wanting to it. Instead of their feelings, our poets have given us their reflections, and philosophy has gained possession of a style of poetry to which it did not seem to have the smallest title.

The Italians have not remained entirely faithful to the genuine style of lyrical composition, but their wanderings have been fewer than ours. It is singular that Petrarch, who was nurtured by the study of the ancients, and who was so much attached to the Roman poets, should never have attempted to introduce the ode into the Italian language. Neglecting the models which Horace has left, and with the value of which he was so well acquainted, Petrarch has clothed all his lyrical inspirations in two measures, both of which are far more

strict and fettered ; the sonnet, borrowed from the Sicilians, and the canzone of the Provençals. These two forms of versification, which have been consecrated by him, and which, down to the present day, are much used in Italy, confined even his genius in their bonds, and gave a less natural air even to his inspiration. The sonnet, more especially, seems to have had a fatal influence on the poetry of Italy. The inspiration of a lyric poet, however it may be confined as to form, should surely have no limitation as to its length. But this bed of Procrustes, as an Italian has ingeniously called it, confines the poet's thoughts within the stated space of fourteen verses. If the thought should be too short for this extent, it is necessary to draw it out, till it fills the common measure ; if, on the contrary, it be too long, it must be barbarously curtailed, in order to introduce it. Above all, it is necessary to set off so short a poem, with brilliant ornaments ; and, as warm and passionate sentiments demand a considerable space in which to display themselves, ingenious conceits have usurped, in a composition so essentially lyrical as this, the place of feeling. Wit, and frequently false wit, is all that we meet with.

The sonnet is composed of two *quatrains* and two *tercets*, and has generally four, and never more than five rhymes. Its admirers discover the most harmonious grace in the regularity of the measure ; in the two *quatrains*, which, with their corresponding rhymes, open the subject and prepare the mind of the reader ; and in the two *tercets*, which, moving more rapidly, fulfil the expectation which has been excited, complete the image, and satisfy the poetical feeling. The sonnet is essentially musical, and essentially founded on the harmony of sound, from which its name is derived. It acts upon the mind rather through the words than by the thoughts. The richness and fulness of the rhymes constitute a portion of its grace. The return of the same sounds makes a powerful impression, in proportion to their repetition and completeness ; and we are astonished when we thus find ourselves affected, almost without the power of being able to ascertain the cause of our emotion.

To find a sufficient number of words which will rhyme together, is a much more laborious task in French than in Italian. In the latter language, almost all the syllables are

simple, and formed from a few letters, so that the words present a great number of similar terminations. But the invariable regularity of the sonnet, in its length and in its measures, produces an indescribable monotony in these compositions. The first division of the sonnet is generally filled with some brilliant images, while the latter contains an epigram, an unexpected turn, or a striking antithesis, to excite the mind to momentary admiration. It is to these poems that the Italians owe their *concetti*, which proceed from an affectation of wit, employed upon words rather than things. Of these, Petrarch, amongst other authors, affords us many examples.

On the other hand, the brevity of the sonnet, has, no doubt, been the cause of much labour and care being bestowed on that kind of composition. In a long poem, the portions which connect the more important parts, are often necessarily devoid of interest. The poet, in all probability, calculating upon the inattention of his readers, is negligent in this part of his task ; an indulgence which is frequently fatal to the language and to the poetical spirit of the piece. When Petrarch, however, gave to the world a short poem of fourteen lines, in this isolated form, which was to be appreciated by its own merits, he bestowed the utmost care upon it, nor suffered it to appear, unless he deemed it worthy of his fame. Thus, the Italian language made a most rapid progress between the times of Dante and Petrarch. More exact rules were introduced ; a crowd of barbarous words were rejected ; the nobler were separated from the more vulgar expressions ; and the latter were excluded for ever from the language of verse. Poetry became more elegant, more melodious, and more pleasing to the ear of taste ; but it lost, at least according to my apprehension, much of the expression f truth and nature.

Petrarch, who founded all his hopes of glory on his Latin compositions, did not place much value upon his Italian verses. The first sonnet which we meet with in his *Canzoniere* is not merely modest, but expresses a singular sentiment of shame for that which, in fact, constitutes his celebrity.

SONNET I.

* All ye who list, in wildly warbled strain,
Those sighs with which my youthful heart was fed,
Erewhile fond passion's maze I wont to tread,
Erewhile I lived estrang'd to manlier pain;
For all those vain desires, and griefs as vain,
Those tears, those plaints, by am'rous fancy bred,
If ye by love's strong power have e'er been led,
Pity, nay, haply pardon, I may gain.
Oft on my cheek the conscious crimson glows,
And sad reflection tells—ungrateful thought!—
How jeering crowds have mock'd my love-lorn woes:
But folly's fruits are penitence and shame,
With this just maxim, I've too dearly bought,
That man's applause is but a transient dream.†

It is evident that this sonnet was written at a period, when the poet, already on the threshold of age, had given himself up to remorse and religious terrors. He, doubtless, reproached himself with fostering a passion, which had exerted so powerful an influence over his life, which he had nourished, with unsubdued constancy, for one and twenty years, and which still remained sacred to his heart, so long after the loss of its object. This remorse was groundless. Never did passion burn more purely than in the love of Petrarch for Laura. Of all the Erotic poets, he alone never expresses a single hope, offensive to the purity of a heart which had been pledged to another. When Petrarch first beheld her, on the sixth of April, 1327, Laura was in the

* Voi ch' ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
Di quei sospiri, ond' io nodriva il core
In sul mio primo giovenile errore,
Quand' era in parte altr' huom da quel ch' i sono;
Del vario stile in ch' io piango e ragiono,
Fra le vane speranze, e 'l van dolore,
Ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
Spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.
Ma ben veggi' hor, sì come al popol tutto
Favola fui gran tempo; onde sovente
Di me medesmo meco mi vergogno:
E del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto
E 'l pentirsi, e' l conoscer chiaramente
Che quanto piace al mondo e breve sogno.

† [The translation of this sonnet is taken from a small volume, published in 1777, under the title of "Sonnets, and Odes, translated from the Italian of Petrarch." For the remaining versions, from this poet, the editor only is responsible.—*Tr.*]

church of Avignon. She was the daughter of Audibert de Noves, and wife of Hugues de Sade, both of Avignon. When she died of the plague, on the sixth of April, 1348, she had been the mother of eleven children. Petrarch has celebrated, in upwards of three hundred sonnets, all the little circumstances of this attachment; those precious favours which, after an acquaintance of fifteen or twenty years, consisted at most of a kind word, a glance not altogether severe, a momentary expression of regret or tenderness at his departure, or a deeper paleness at the idea of losing her beloved and constant friend. Yet even these marks of an attachment so pure and unobtrusive, and which he had so often struggled to subdue, were repressed by the coldness of Laura, who, to preserve her lover, cautiously abstained from giving the least encouragement to his love. She avoided his presence, except at church, in the brilliant levees of the papal court, or in the country, where, surrounded by her friends, she is described by Petrarch as exhibiting the semblance of a queen, pre-eminent amongst them all in the grace of her figure, and the brilliancy of her beauty. It does not appear that, in the whole course of these twenty years, the poet ever addressed her, unless in the presence of witnesses. An interview with her alone would surely have been celebrated in a thousand verses; and, as he has left us four sonnets on the good fortune he enjoyed, in having an opportunity of picking up her glove,* we may fairly presume, that he would not have passed over in silence so happy a circumstance as a private interview. There is no poet, in any language, so perfectly pure as Petrarch, so completely above all reproach of levity and immorality; and this merit, which is due equally to the poet and to his Laura, is still more remarkable, when we consider that the models which he followed were by no means entitled to the same praise. The verses of the Troubadours and of the Trouvères were very licentious. The court of Avignon, at which Laura lived, the Babylon of the West, as the poet himself often terms it, was filled with the most shameful corruption; and even the popes, more especially Clement V. and Clement VI. had afforded examples of great depravity. Indeed, Petrarch

* Sonnets 166 to 169.

himself, in his intercourse with other ladies, was by no means so reserved. For Laura, he had conceived a sort of religious and enthusiastic passion; such as mystics imagine they feel towards the Deity, and such as Plato supposes to be the bond of union between elevated minds. The poets, who have succeeded Petrarch, have amused themselves with giving representations of a similar passion, of which, in fact, they had little or no experience.

In order to appreciate the full beauty of Petrarch's sonnets, it would be necessary to write the history of his attachment, as M. Ginguené has so ably done; and thus to assign to every sonnet, the place to which its particular sentiment destines it. But it would be even more necessary, that I should myself be sensible of the excellence of these poems, and that I should feel that charm which has enchanted every nation and every age. To this, I must acknowledge, that I am a stranger. I could have wished, in order to comprehend and to become interested in the passion of Petrarch, that there should have been a somewhat better understanding between the lovers; that they should have had a more intimate knowledge of each other; and that, by this means, we might ourselves have been better acquainted with both. I could have wished to have seen some impression made upon the sensibility of this loving and long-loved lady; to have seen her heart, as well as her mind, enlarging itself and yielding to the constancy and the purity of true friendship, since virtue denied a more tender return. It is tiresome to find the same veil, always shading not only the figure, but the intellect and the heart of the woman who is celebrated in these monotonous verses. If the poet had allowed us a fairer view of her, he would have been less likely to fall into exaggerations, into which my imagination, at least, is unable to follow him. How desirable would it be, that he should have recalled her to our minds by thought, by feeling, and by passion, rather than by a perpetual play upon the words *Laura* (the laurel), and *l'aura* (the air). The first of these conceits, more especially, is incessantly repeated, nor merely in the poems alone. Throughout Petrarch's whole life, we are in doubt whether it is of Laura, or of the laurel, that he is enamoured; so great is the emotion which he expresses, whenever he beholds the latter; so passionately does he

mention it; and so frequently has he celebrated it in his verses. Nor is that personified heart, to which Petrarch perpetually addresses himself, less fatiguing. It speaks, it answers, it argues, it is ever upon his lips, in his eyes, and yet ever at a distance. He is always absent, and we cannot avoid wishing that during his banishment, he would for once cease to speak of it. Judging from these *concetti*, and from the continual personification of beings which have no personal attributes, it has always appeared to me that Petrarch is by no means so great a poet as Dante, because he is less of a painter. There is scarcely one of his sonnets, in which the leading idea is not completely at variance with the principles of painting, and which does not, therefore, escape from the imagination. Poetry may be called a happy union of two of the fine arts. It has borrowed its harmonies from music, and its images from painting. But, to confound the two objects which poetry has thus in view, is to be equally in error; whether we attempt, by an image, to represent a coincidence in sound, as when the laurel is put for Laura; or whether we wish to call up an image by sounds, as when, neglecting the rules of harmony, we produce a discordance suited to the object we design to paint, and make the serpents of which we are speaking, hiss in our verses. Waiving, however, as far as depends upon myself, my prejudice against Petrarch, of which I feel somewhat distrustful, because it is in oppposition to the general taste, I shall translate a few of his sonnets; not for the purpose of criticising them, but in order to lead those, who are but imperfectly acquainted with the Italian language, to a more complete knowledge of them, so that they may read them without fatigue, and may comprehend the sense, while they enjoy the harmony of the sound; and, in short, that they may form their own judgment upon the masterpieces of one of the most celebrated men of modern times.

SONNET XIV.

With hoary head and locks of reverend grey,
The old man leaves his youth's sweet dwelling-place,
And grief is mark'd on each familiar face,
Which watches him, as forth he takes his way:
And he departs, though from his latest day
Not distant far, and with an old man's pace,
With right good will, he enters on the race,
Though travel-tired and broken with decay:

And now, accomplishing his last desires,
In Rome, he sees the image of that One,
Whom to behold in Heaven his soul aspires;
Even so have I, sweet lady! ever gone
Searching, in others' features, for some trace
Approaching thy long-lost peculiar grace.*

SONNET XVII.

Creatures there be, of sight so keen and high,
That even on the sun they bend their gaze;
Others, who, dazzled by too fierce a blaze
Issue not forth till evening veils the sky;
Others, who, with insane desire, would try
The bliss which dwells within the fire's bright rays,
But, in their sport, find that its fervour slays;
Alas! of this last heedless band am I:
Since strength I boast not, to support the light
Of that fair form, nor, in obscure sojourn,
Am skill'd to fence me, nor enshrouding night;
Wherefore, with eyes which ever weep and mourn,
My fate compels me still to court her sight,
Conscious I follow flames which shine to burn. †

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* Movesi 'l vecchiarel canuto e bianco
Dal dolce loco ov' ha sua età fornita,
E dalla famigliuola sbigottita
Che vede il caro padre venir manco;
Indi traendo poi l' antico fianco
Per l' estreme giornate di sua vita,
Quanto più può, col buon voler s' aita,
Rotto dagli anni, e dal cammino stanco:
E viene a Roma seguendo 'l desio,
Per mirar la sembianza di colui
Ch' ancor lassu nel ciel vedere spera:
Così lasso talor vo cercand' io
Donna, quant' è possibile, in altrui
La desiata vostra forma vera.

† Son animali al mondo di sì altera
Vista, che 'ncontr' al sol pur si difende;
Altri, però che 'l gran lume gli offende,
Non escon fuor se non verso la sera;
Ed altri col desio folle, che spera
Gioir forse nel foco, perche splende,
Provan l' altra virtù, quella che 'ncende;
Lasso, il mio loco è 'n questa ultima schiera;
Ch' i non son forte ad aspettar la luce
Di questa donna, e non sò fare schermi
Di luoghi tenebrosi, ò d'ore tarde.
Però con gli occhi lagrimosi e 'nfermi
Mio destino a vederla mi conduce:
E sò ben ch' io vò dietro a quel che m' arde.

The succeeding sonnet was written at a time, when the beauties of Laura began to fade. We are astonished at the constancy which Petrarch displays, towards one who could no longer charm the eye of the beholder.

SONNET LXIX.

Waved to the winds were those long locks of gold,
Which in a thousand burnish'd ringlets flow'd,
And the sweet light, beyond all measure, glow'd,
Of those fair eyes, which I no more behold;
Nor (so it seem'd) that face, aught harsh or cold
To me (if true or false, I know not) shew'd:
Me, in whose breast the amorous lure abode,
If flames consumed, what marvel to unfold?
That step of hers was of no mortal guise,
But of angelic nature, and her tongue
Had other utterance than of human sounds:
A living sun, a spirit of the skies,
I saw her—Now, perhaps, not so—But wounds
Heal not, for that the bow is since unstrung.*

In the second part of Petrarch's poems, we find those which were written after the death of Laura, who, as we have already mentioned, died in 1548, at the age of forty-one, having been, for twenty-one years, the object of Petrarch's attachment. The poet was, at the time of that event, at Verona; and some of the poems, which were occasioned by this loss, are distinguished by more natural feelings, and excite in the reader a more lively sympathy. Still, there is, perhaps, too much ingenuity and invention displayed, to be compatible with great grief.

* Erano i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi,
Che 'n mille dolci nodi gli avolgea:
E 'l vago lume oltra misura ardea
Di quei begli occhi, ch' or ne son si scarsi·
E 'l viso di pietosi color farsi,
Non sò se vero ò falso, mi parea:
I' che l' esca amorosa al petto avea,
Qual maraviglia, se di subit', arsi?
Non era l' andar suo cosa mortale,
Ma d'angelica forma, e le parole
Sonavan altro che pur voce humana.
Uno spirto celeste, un vivo sole
Fù quel ch' i vidi: e se non fosse or tale,
Piaga per allentar d'arco non sana.

SONNET CCLI.

Those eyes, my bright and glowing theme erewhile
That arm, those hands, that lovely foot, that face,
Whose view was wont my fancy to beguile,
And raise me high o'er all of human race;
Those golden locks that flow'd in liquid graee,
And the sweet lightning of that angel smile,
Which made a Paradise of every place,
What are they? dust, insensible and vile!
And yet I live! oh grief! oh rage! oh shame!
Reft of the guiding star I loved so long,
A shipwreck'd bark, which storms of woes assail.
Be this the limit of my amorous song:
Quench'd in my bosom is the sacred flame,
And my harp murmurs its expiring wail.*

On his return to Vaucluse, where he was never again to behold his Laura, Petrarch wrote the following sonnet.

SONNET CCLXXIX.

I feel the well-known breeze, and the sweet hill
Again appears, where rose that beauteous light
Which (while Heaven will'd it) met my eyes, then bright
With gladness, but now dimm'd with many an ill.
Vain hopes! weak thoughts! Now, turbid is the rill;
The flowers have droop'd; and she hath ta'en her flight
From the cold nest, which once, in proud delight,
Living and dying, I had hoped to fill:
I hoped, in these retreats, and in the blaze
Of her fair eyes, which have consumed my heart,
To taste the sweet reward of troubled days.
Thou, whom I serve, how hard and proud thou art!
Erewhile, thy flame consumed me; now, I mourn
Over the ashes which have ceased to burn.*

---

* Gli occhi, di ch'io parlai si caldamente,
E le braccia et le mani, e i piedi, e 'l viso,
Che m' havean sì da me stesso diviso,
E fatto singular da l'altra gente;
Le crespe chiome d'or puro lucente,
E 'l lampeggiar de l'angelico riso,
Che solean far in terra un paradiso,
Poca polvere son che nulla sente.
Ed io pur vivo: onde mi doglio e sdegno,
Rimaso senza 'l lume, ch' amai tanto,
In gran fortune, e'n disarmato legno.
Or sia qui fine al mio amoroso canto:
Secca e la vena de l'usato ingegno,
E la cetera mia rivolta in pianto.

* Sento l'aura mia antica, e i dolci colli
Veggio apparir, onde 'l bel lume nacque
Che tenne gli occhi miei, mentr' al ciel piacque,
Bramosi e lieti; or li tien tristi molli

Were I to give more numerous extracts, they would not render the style and the spirit of Petrarch's sonnets better known to those who do not read Italian; and, as examples merely, what are given are sufficient. The other form of his lyrical compositions, the *canzone*, is not unknown to us, although we have no express word for it, in the French; that of *chanson*, derived from it, signifying a poem of a totally different kind. We have seen that, amongst the Troubadours and the Trouvères, the chansons were odes divided into regular stanzas, longer than those of the odes of antiquity. The verses, which had the variety both of measure and rhyme, were disposed according to the rule of harmony which the poet established in the first stanza, and which was scrupulously observed in all the subsequent ones. The Italian *canzone* differed from the Provençal, in not being limited to five stanzas and an envoy, and in the more rare use of those very short lines, which sometimes give such vivacity to the Provençal poetry. There are some of Petrarch's *canzoni*, in which we find stanzas of twenty lines. This extraordinary length, which perhaps renders the harmony less perceptible to the ear, has given a peculiar character to the *canzoni*, and distinguishes the romantic from the classical ode. Modern poets, instead of pursuing the rapid and passionate inspiration of their feelings, dwell upon the same thought; not precisely for the purpose of filling up the stanza, for, to this mechanical process, the true poet will never submit, but of preserving the regular and corresponding advance of the stanza and the sentiment. They bestowed more attention upon that reflective spirit, which is occupied with its own contemplations; upon that analytical power, which subjects every thing to its scrutiny; and upon that forcible imagination, which places its object before us; but their enthusiasm vanished. The translation of a canzone of Petrarch could never be confounded

O caduche speranze, o pensier folli!
Vedove l'herbe e torbide son l'acque;
E voto, e freddo 'l nido in ch' ella giacque,
Nel qual io vivo e morto giacer volli;
Sperando al fin da le soavi piante
E da' begli occhi suoi, che'l cor m'han arso,
Riposo alcun da le fatiche tante.
Ho servito a signor crudele e scarso:
Ch' arsi quanto 'l mio foco hebbe davante;
Or vò piangendo il suo cenere sparso.

with the translation of an ode of Horace. We are obliged to class them both under the head of lyrical poems; but we immediately perceive that such a division includes very different kinds of compositions.

I feel myself called upon to give, at least, a small specimen of those poems which have contributed so greatly to the renown of Petrarch; and I shall select a few stanzas from the fifth canzone, in which he exhorts the Bishop of Lombez to take up the cross, for the delivery of the Holy Land. This is, in my opinion, one of his most brilliant and enthusiastic poems, and one which approaches nearest to the ancient ode.

And all who dwell between the salt main-seas
And Rhone, and Rhine, and all between thy wave,
Garonne! and the high hills, that Christian train
Shall join. And if there be who love the brave,
Within that circle which the Pyrenees
Hold in horizon, Aragon and Spain
Shall be left desert. England, with the isles
Sea-girt, between the constellated Bear
And the great-pillar'd streight;
Yea, every land, where yet
The sainted lore of Helicon has charms,
Diverse in language, in attire, in arms,
This deed, for charity's sweet sake, shall dare.
What love so faithful, or what tender age
Of child, or charms of maiden, may compare
With the stern duties of this holy rage!

A region of the world there is afar,
Whelm'd under drifted snows, and bound with frost,
Where, wide remote from the sun's bright career,
In clouds and mist, the day is briefly lost;
There dwell a race, by nature prone to war,
And, even in death itself, disdaining fear,
Let these, more pious than they yet appear,
Join, with their hardy bands, the German host!
Thenceforth, I deem, not long
The Turk and Arab throng,
With the Chaldee, along the Red Sea coast,
Their own vain force, or their false gods shall boast!
A people naked, timorous, slow,
To grasp the steel, nor skill'd, nor strong,
But wasting on the wind their aimless blow! *

* Chiunque alberga tra Garona e 'l monte,
E tra 'l Rodano e 'l Reno e l'onde salse,
L' ensegne Christianissime accompagna:
Et a cui mai di vero pregio calse

Dal

We shall not enter into so minute an examination of those allegorical poems, to which Petrarch has given the name of Triumphs. Not because they display any paucity of imagination, or any want of that pictorial art, by which the poet places the object of his verse before the eyes of his reader; but because those compositions are evidently formed on the model of Dante. There is the same metre; the same division into cantos, or chapters, not exceeding a hundred and fifty lines; and there are similar kinds of visions, in which the poet is partly the spectator and partly the actor. He is present, successively, at the Triumph of Love, of Chastity, of Death, of Renown, of Time, and of the Divinity. But the great vision of Dante, occupying a long poem, approaches almost to a second nature. We are struck with the action; we are interested for the characters; and we forget the allegory. Petrarch, on the contrary, never loses sight of his object, or the moral precept which he designs to inculcate. Two things alone are perpetually before our eyes; the advice intended for the reader, and the vanity of the poet; and we see

Dal Pireneo a ultimo orizonte,
Con Aragon lascerà vota Ispagna;
Inghilterra, con l'Isole che bagna
L'Oceano, intra'l earro e le colonne,
Infin là, dove sona
Dottrina del santissimo Helicona,
Varie di lingue, e d'arme, e de le gonne,
A l'alta impresa caritate sprona,
Deh! qual amor si licito, ò si degno.
Quai figli mai, quai donne
Furon materia a si giusto disdegno?

Una parte del mondo è che si giace
Mai sempre in ghiaccio ed in gelate nevi,
Tutta lontana dal cammin del sole.
Là, sotto giorni nubilosi e brevi,
Nemica naturalmente di pace,
Nasce una gente a cui 'l morir non dole.
Questa, se più devota che non sole
Col Tedesco furor la spada cigne.
Turchi Arabi e Chaldei
Con tutti quei che speran ne gli Dei
Di quà dal mar che fà l'onde sanguigne,
Quanto sian da prezzar, conoscer dei:
Popolo ignudo, paventoso e lento,
Che ferro mai non strigne,
Ma tutti i colpi suoi commette al vento.

as little inclined to gratify the latter as to profit by the former.

The Latin compositions, upon which Petrarch rested his fame, and which are twelve or fifteen times as voluminous as his Italian writings, are now only read by the learned. The long poem entitled *Africa*, which he composed on the victories of the elder Scipio, and which was considered, in his own age, as a masterpiece worthy of rivalling the Æneid, is very fatiguing to the ear. The style is inflated, and the subject so devoid of interest, and so exceedingly dull, as absolutely to prevent the perusal of the work. His numerous epistles in verse, instead of giving interest to the historical events to which they allude, acquire it from that circumstance. The imitation of the ancients, and the fidelity of the copy, which in Petrarch's eyes constituted their chief merit, deprive these productions of every appearance of truth. The invectives against the barbarians who had subjugated Italy, are so cold, so bombastic, and so utterly destitute of all colouring suited to the time and place, that we might believe them to be written by some rhetorician, who had never seen Italy; and we might confound them with those which a poetic fury dictated to Petrarch himself, against the Gauls who besieged the capital. His philosophical works, amongst which may be mentioned a treatise on Solitary Life, and another on Good and Bad Fortune, are scarcely less bombastic. The sentiments display neither truth nor depth of thought. They are merely a show of words, on some given subject. The author pre-determines his view of the question, and never examines the arguments for the purpose of discovering the truth, but of vanquishing the difficulties which oppose him, and of making every thing agree with his own system. His letters, of which a voluminous collection has been published, which is, however, far from being complete, are, perhaps, more read than any other of his works, as they throw much light upon a period which is well worthy of being known. We do not, however, discover in them either the familiarity of intimate friendship, or the complete openness of an amiable character. They display great caution, and studied propriety, with an attention to effect, which is not always successful. An Italian would never have written Latin letters to his friends, if he had wished only to unfold the secrets of his heart; but

the letters of Cicero were in Latin, and with them Petrarch wished to have his own compared. He was, evidently, always thinking more of the public than of his correspondent ; and, in fact, the public were often in possession of the letter before his friend. The bearer of an elegantly-written epistle, well knew that he should flatter the vanity of the writer by communicating it ; and he therefore often openly read it, and even gave copies of it, before it reached its destination. We find, in his correspondence, that several letters were lost in consequence of their too great fame.

It is difficult to say, whether the extended reputation which Petrarch enjoyed, during the course of a long life, is more glorious to himself, or to his age. We have elsewhere mentioned the faults of this celebrated man ; that subtlety of intellect which frequently led him to neglect true feeling, and to abandon himself to a false taste ; and that vanity which too often induced him to call himself the friend of cruel and contemptible princes, because they flattered him. But, before we part with him, let us once more take a view of those great qualities which rendered him the first man of his age ; that ardent love for science, to which he consecrated his life, his powers, and his faculties ; and that glorious enthusiasm for all that is high and noble in the poetry, the eloquence, the laws, and the manners of antiquity. This enthusiasm is the mark of a superior mind. To such a mind, the hero becomes greater by being contemplated ; while a narrow and sterile intellect reduces the greatest men to its own level, and measures them by its own standard. This enthusiasm was felt by Petrarch, not only for distinguished men, but for every thing that is great in nature, for religion, for philosophy, for patriotism, and for freedom. He was the friend and patron of the unfortunate Rienzi, who, in the fourteenth century, awakened for a moment the ancient spirit and fortunes of Rome. He appreciated the fine arts as well as poetry ; and he contributed to make the Romans acquainted with the rich monuments of antiquity, as well as with the manuscripts, which they possessed. His passions were tinctured with a sense of religion which induced him to worship all the glorious works of the Deity, with which the earth abounds ; and he believed, that in the woman whom he loved, he saw the messenger of that Heaven, which thus revealed to him its beauty.

He enabled his contemporaries to estimate the full value of the purity of a passion, so modest and so religious as his own; while, to his countrymen, he gave a language worthy of rivalling those of Greece and of Rome, with which, by his means, they had become familiar. Softening and ornamenting his own language by the adoption of proper rules, he suited it to the expression of every feeling, and changed, in some degree, its essence. He inspired his age with that enthusiastic love for the beauty, and that veneration for the study of antiquity, which gave it a new character, and which determined that of succeeding times. It was, it may be said, in the name of grateful Europe, that Petrarch, on the eighth of April, 1341, was crowned by the senator of Rome, in the Capitol; and this triumph, the most glorious which was ever decreed to man, was not disproportioned to the authority which this great poet was destined to maintain over future ages.

CHAPTER XI.

BOCCACCIO.—ITALIAN LITERATURE, AT THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTEENTH, AND DURING THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The fourteenth century forms a brilliant æra in Italian literature, highly honourable to the human intellect, and is distinguished, beyond any other period, for the creative powers of genius which it exhibited. The germ of literature also existed in other countries. The poetry of this epoch which has survived to us, possesses a charm, derived from the dawn of civilization, in its novelty, vigour, and freshness of imagination; but it belongs rather to the age which gave it birth than to any individual. The songs of the South of France, the chivalrous tales of the North of Europe, the romances of Spain, and the pastorals of Portugal, bear a national character, which pleasingly reminds us of the spirit and manners of the time; but they do not strike us as the work of a powerful genius, nor awake in us an attachment to any individual poet. It was not thus with Italy. The culture of the mind was, at least, as far advanced there, as in France and Spain; but in the midst of their numerous contemporaries, three writers, who, each in his own sphere, gave

a new impulse to their native tongue, were especially remarkable. These men afforded models which were ardently followed in other countries, and raised to themselves memorials which the most distant posterity will regard with delight. At the opening of this century, Dante gave to Europe his great poem; the first which, since the dawn of letters, could bear a comparison with the ancient epic. The lyric muse again strung her lyre at the call of Petrarch; and Boccaccio was the creator of a style of prose, harmonious, flexible, and engaging, and alike suitable to the most elevated and to the most playful subjects. The last mentioned member of this illustrious triumvirate cannot, indeed, be ranked so high as his two contemporaries, since the prose style, of which he was the author, is not of so elevated a class as the efforts of the muse, and the formation of the language of common life seems less to require the higher powers of genius. His chief work, moreover, is sullied by immorality; and the eloquence of his expression is too frequently allied to an improper levity. Yet that energy of mind which enabled him to give birth to a style of prose at once so pure, so elegant, and so harmonious, when no model for it existed either in the Italian, or in any other language of the age, is not less deserving of admiration, than those inspirations of genius which awoke and gave rules to the higher strains of poetry.

Giovanni Boccaccio was born at Paris, in 1313, and was the natural son of a merchant of Florence, himself born at Certaldo, a castle in the Val d'Elsa, in the Florentine territory. His father had intended him for a commercial life, but before devoting him to it, indulged him with a literary education. From his earliest years, Boccaccio evinced a decided predilection for letters. He wrote verses, and manifested an extreme aversion to trade. He revolted equally at the prospect of a commercial life, and the study of the canon law, which his father was desirous of his undertaking. To oblige his father, however, he made several journeys of business; but he brought back with him, instead of a love for his employment, a more extended information, and an increased passion for study. He at length obtained permission to devote himself wholly to literature, and fixed on Naples as his place of residence, where letters then flourished under the powerful protection of Robert, the reigning monarch. He

was quickly initiated in all the sciences at that time taught. He acquired also the rudiments of the Greek tongue, which, though then spoken in Calabria, was an abstruse study with the early scholars. In 1341, he assisted at the celebrated examination of Petrarch, which preceded his coronation at Rome; and, from that time, a friendship arose between him and the poet, which terminated only with their lives. At this period, Boccaccio, distinguished no less for the elegance of his person than for the brilliancy of his wit, and devoted to pleasure, formed an attachment to a natural daughter of King Robert, named Maria, who for several years had been the wife of a Neapolitan gentleman. This lady he has celebrated in his writings, under the name of Fiammetta. In the attachment of Boccaccio, we must not look for that purity or delicacy which distinguished Petrarch in his love for Laura. This princess had been brought up in the most corrupt court of Italy; she herself partook of its spirit, and it is to her depraved taste that the exceptionable parts of the Decameron, a work undertaken by Boccaccio in compliance with her request, and for her amusement, are to be attributed. On his side, Boccaccio probably loved her as much from vanity as from real passion; for, although distinguished for her beauty, her grace, and her wit, as much as for her rank, she does not seem to have exercised any extraordinary influence on his life; and neither the conduct nor the writings of Boccaccio afford evidence of a sincere or profound attachment. Boccaccio quitted Naples in 1342, to return to Florence. He came back again in 1344, and returned for the last time in 1350. From that year, he fixed himself in his native country, where his reputation had already assigned him a distinguished rank. His life was thenceforth occupied by his public employments in several embassies; by the duties which his increasing friendship to Petrarch imposed on him; and by the constant and indefatigable labours to which he devoted himself for the advancement of letters, the discovery of ancient manuscripts, the elucidation of subjects of antiquity, the introduction of the Greek language into Italy, and the composition of his numerous works. After taking the ecclesiastical habit, in 1361, he died at Certaldo, in the mansion of his ancestors, on the twenty-first of December, 1375, at the age of sixty-two.

The Decameron, the work to which Boccaccio is at the present day indebted for his highest celebrity, is a collection of one hundred Novels or Tales. He has ingeniously united them, under the supposition of a party formed in the dreadful pestilence of 1348, composed of a number of cavaliers, and young, intelligent, and accomplished women, retired to a delightful part of the country, to escape the contagion. It was there agreed that each person, during the space of ten days, should narrate, daily, a fresh story. The company consisted of ten persons, and thus the number of stories amounted to one hundred. The description of the enchanting country in the neighbourhood of Florence, where these gay recluses had established themselves; the record of their walks, their numerous *fêtes*, and their repasts, afforded Boccaccio an opportunity of displaying all the treasures of his powerful and easy pen. These stories, which are varied with infinite art, as well in subject as in style, from the most pathetic and tender to the most sportive, and, unfortunately, the most licentious, exhibit a wonderful power of narration; and his description of the plague in Florence, which serves as an introduction to them, may be ranked with the most celebrated historical descriptions which have descended to us. The perfect truth of colouring; the exquisite choice of circumstances, calculated to produce the deepest impression, and which place before our eyes the most repulsive scenes, without exciting disgust; and the emotion of the writer, which insensibly pervades every part, give to this picture that true eloquence of history which, in Thucydides, animates the relation of the plague in Athens. Boccaccio had, doubtless, this model before his eyes; but the events, to which he was a witness, had vividly impressed his mind, and it was the faithful delineation of what he had seen, rather than the classical imitation, which served to develope his talent.

One cannot but pause in astonishment, at the choice of so gloomy an introduction to effusions of so gay a nature. We are amazed at such an intoxicated enjoyment of life, under the threatened approach of death; at such irrepressible desire in the bosom of man to divert the mind from sorrow; and at the torrent of mirth which inundates the heart, in the midst of horrors which should seem to wither it up. As long as we feel delight in nourishing feelings that are in unison with

a melancholy temperament, we have not yet felt the overwhelming weight of real sorrow. When experience has, at length, taught us the substantial griefs of life, we then first learn the necessity of resisting them; and, calling the imagination to our aid, to turn aside the shafts of calamity, we struggle with our sorrow, and treat it as an invalid, from whom we withdraw every object which may remind him of the cause of his malady. With regard to the stories themselves, it would be difficult to convey an idea of them by extracts, and impossible to preserve, in a translation, the merits of their style. The praise of Boccaccio consists in the perfect purity of his language, in his elegance, his grace, and, above all, in that *naïveté*, which is the chief merit of narration, and the peculiar charm of the Italian tongue. Unfortunately, Boccaccio did not prescribe to himself the same purity in his images as in his phraseology. The character of his work is light and sportive. He has inserted in it a great number of tales of gallantry; he has exhausted his powers of ridicule on the duped husband, on the depraved and depraving monks, and on subjects, in morals and religious worship, which he himself regarded as sacred; and his reputation is thus little in harmony with the real tenor of his conduct. The Decameron was published towards the middle of the fourteenth century (in 1352 or 1353), when Boccaccio was at least thirty-nine years of age; and from the first discovery of printing, was freely circulated in Italy, until the Council of Trent proscribed it, in the middle of the sixteenth century. At the solicitation of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and after two remarkable negotiations between this Prince and Pope Pius V. and Sixtus V., the Decameron was again published, in 1573 and 1582, purified and corrected.

Many of the tales of Boccaccio appear to be borrowed from popular recitation, or from real occurrences. We trace the originals of several, in the ancient French *fabliaux*; of some, in the Italian collection of the *Centi Novelli*; and of others, again, in an Indian romance, which passed through all the languages of the East, and of which a Latin translation appeared as early as the twelfth century, under the name of *Dolopathos*, or the King and the Seven Wise Men. Invention, in this class of writing, is not less rare than in every other; and the same tales, probably, which Boccaccio had

collected in the gay courts of princes, or in the squares of the cities of Italy, have been repeated to us anew in all the various languages of Europe. They have been versified by the early poets of France and England, and have afforded reputation to three or four imitators of Boccaccio. But, if Boccaccio cannot boast of being the inventor of these tales, he may still claim the creation of this class of letters. Before his time, tales were only subjects of social mirth. He was the first to transport them into the world of letters; and, by the elegance of his diction, the just harmony of all the parts of his subject, and the charm of his narration, he superadded the more refined gratifications of language and of art, to the simpler delight afforded by the old narrators.

A romance of Boccaccio, called the *Fiammetta*, is, after the Tales, the most celebrated of his works. Boccaccio may be considered as the inventor of the love romances. This species of composition was wholly unknown to antiquity. The Byzantine Greeks, indeed, possessed some romances, which have since reached us; but there is no reason to believe that Boccaccio had ever seen them, nor, if he had been acquainted with them, is it probable that he would have imitated works of imagination, invented so long after the decline of literature. The chivalric romances of the French, of which we have spoken, had, it is true, a connexion with that class of which Boccaccio may be considered the creator. But instead of having recourse to marvellous incidents, which might engage the imagination, he has drawn his resources from the human heart and passions. Fiammetta is a noble lady of Naples, who relates her passion and her sufferings. She speaks in her own person, and the author himself never appears. The incidents are little varied, and they fall off, instead of increasing in interest, towards the conclusion. But the passion is expressed with a fervour and a voluptuousness, beyond that of any other Italian writer. We feel that Fiammetta is consumed by the flame which she divulges; and although not in any way allied to Phædra, that character recurs to our recollection. In the one, as well as in the other,

"C'est Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée."

Boccaccio was accustomed to represent, under the name of Fiammetta, the Princess Maria, the object of his love. The

scene, which is laid at Naples, the rank of the lady, and many other circumstances, would lead us to believe, that, in this romance, Boccaccio has in some measure related his own adventures. But, in this case, it is remarkable, that he should assign the chief part to the lady; that he should paint the passionate love of Fiammetta, and the infidelity of Panfilo, in a work dedicated to his mistress; and that he should reveal to the public, adventures on which his honour and his life might depend.

The conversations in the Fiammetta may, perhaps, be considered tedious; and we are fatigued by the scholastic mode of reasoning of the interlocutors, who are never disposed to relinquish an argument. The style is in reality dull; but this was a necessary consequence of the education and pedantry in repute at the time of its composition. Another, and a more singular defect in this romance, arises from the incongruous mixture of the ancient mythology with the Christian religion. Fiammetta, who had seen Panfilo for the first time at mass, in a Catholic church, is determined, by Venus appearing to her, to listen to his passion; and, during the whole recital, the manners and belief of the ancients and moderns are continually intermixed. We remark this incongruity in the romances and *fabliaux* of the middle ages, on all occasions when the *Trouvères* have attempted the manners of antiquity. As these ignorant authors could not form an idea of any other mode of manners than that of their own age, they have given an air of Christianity to all which they have borrowed from ancient mythology. But the scholars who restored the study of the classics, with Boccaccio at their head, treated the subject differently. It was to the gods of antiquity that they attributed life, power, and energy. Accustomed to confine their admiration to the ancient classics, they always recurred to the object of their studies, and to the images and machinery to which they were habituated, even in works which were founded on the warmest feelings of the heart.

Boccaccio was the author, also, of another romance, longer than the Fiammetta, and more generally known, intitled *Filocopo*. In this, are narrated the adventures of Florio and Biancafiore, the heroes of an ancient chivalric romance, which Boccaccio has merely remodelled. The mixture of the ancient mythology with Christianity seems, there, to be

effected in a more systematic manner than in the Fiammetta. Boccaccio speaks always of the religion of the moderns in the terms of the ancients. In alluding to the war between Manfred of Sicily and Charles of Anjou, he represents the Pope as high priest of Juno, and imagines him to be instigated by that goddess, who thus revenges herself on the last descendants of the emperors, for the ancient wrong which Dido suffered. He afterwards speaks of the incarnation of the son of Jupiter, and of his descending to the earth to reform and redeem it. He even addresses a prayer to Jupiter, and, in short, seems determined to confound the two religions, and to prove that they are, in fact, the same worship, under different names. It may be doubted, whether fastidiousness might lead Boccaccio to believe that he ought not to employ, in a work of taste, names which were unknown to the writers of the Augustan age; or whether, on the contrary, a religious scruple, still more eccentric, forbade him to mingle the name of the Deity, with the tales of his own invention. In either case, this system of poetical religion is not less extraordinary than profane. There are, in the Filocopo, many more adventures, and a greater variety of incident, but less passion than in the Fiammetta. The perusal is sometimes rendered fatiguing, by the pains which Boccaccio has taken to make the style harmonious, and to round his periods; and this measured prose betrays a laboured and sometimes an affected style.

Boccaccio has also left two heroic poems, *La Theseide* and *Filostrato*, neither of which has obtained any great reputation, and both are, at the present day, nearly forgotten. They deserve, however, to be mentioned, as being the first attempts at the ancient epic, since the fall of the Roman empire. Petrarch, it is true, had, in his Latin poem of *Africa*, attempted to rival Virgil; but he did little more than clothe an historical narration in frigid hexameters, nor has he invested his subject with any other poetic charm than that which arises from the regularity of the verse. Boccaccio, on the contrary, was sensible that a powerful imagination and feeling were essential to the epic. But he overreached his mark, and composed romances rather than poems; although, even here, he opened to his successors the route which they were to follow.

These two poems of Boccaccio, in another point of view, form an æra in the history of epic poetry. They are both composed in *ottava rima*, or in that kind of stanza of eight lines, which has since been employed by all the epic poets of Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Of this, Boccaccio was the inventor. He found that the *terza rima*, employed by Dante, imposed too great a constraint on the poet, and, by its close texture, held the attention of the reader too long suspended. All the other forms of versification were appropriated to the lyric muse; and any verses which were not submitted to a regular structure, did not seem sufficiently poetical to the refined ears of the Italians. The stanza which Boccaccio invented, is composed of six lines, which rhyme interchangeably with each other, and are followed by a couplet. There exist instances of the octave verse before his time, but under a different form.*

* We find, in the earlier poetry of the Sicilians, stanzas of eight verses, with only two rhymes, alternately employed. As early as the thirteenth century, the Castilian writers made use of the octave stanza, with three rhymes; and a remarkable work of Alfonso the Tenth, King of Castile, to which we shall have occasion again to refer, is written in this metre. These stanzas of eight lines are composed of two distinct stanzas of four lines each, and the distribution of the rhymes may be thus denoted: 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 3, 3, 1. The stanza invented by Boccaccio, and which was adopted even in Castile, runs thus: 1, 2; 1, 2; 1, 2; 3, 3. As a specimen of this sort of verse, and of the style of Boccaccio, the commencement of *La Theseide* is subjoined.

O Sorelle Castalie, che nel monte
Elacona contente dimorate,
D'intorno al saggio Gorgoneo fonte,
Sotto esso l'ombra delle frondi amate
Da Febo, dalle quali ancor la fronte
Spero d' ornarmi, sol che 'l concediate,
Le sante orecchie a miei preghi porgete,
E quelli udite come voi dovete.

E' m' e venuta voglia, con pietosa
Rima, di scrivere una storia antica,
Tanto negli anni riposta e nascosa
Che latin autor non par che ne dica,
Per quel ch'io senta, al libbro alcuna cosa.
Dunque si fate, che la mia fatica
Sia gratiosa a chi ne fia lettore,
O in altra maniera ascoltatore.

Siate presenti, o Marte rubicondo!
Nelle tue armi rigido e feroce,
E tu, madre d' amor, col tuo giocondo
E lieto aspetto, e 'l tuo figliol veloce,

Co

The Latin compositions of Boccaccio are voluminous, and materially contributed, at the time they were written, to the advancement of letters. The most celebrated of these works, are two Treatises; the one on the Genealogy of the Gods, and the other on mountains, forests, and rivers. In the first he gave an exposition of the ancient mythology; and in the second, rectified many errors in geography. These two works have fallen into neglect, since the discovery of manuscripts then unknown, and in consequence of the facilities which the art of printing, by opening new sources, has afforded to the study of antiquity. In the age in which they

> Co dardi sol possente à tutto 'l mondo;
> E sostenete la mano e la voce
> Di me, ch' entendo e vostri affetti dire,
> Con poco bene e pien d'assai martire.

> And you, sweet sisters! who delight to dwell
> Amid the quiet haunts of Castaly,
> Playing beside the brink of that famed well,
> And by the fount where springs the sacred tree
> Belov'd by you, and him, the god, whose shell
> Resounds its praise; whose honoured leaves shall be,
> So let me dream! a poet's meed: O hear
> His ardent prayer, if prayers to you be dear.
>
> For Love's sake, would I tell the piteous pain,
> The sad turns of a wild and ancient story,
> Long hidden 'neath the veil of time, in vain
> Sought for in Roman lore, or records hoary
> Of far-off years. O help my feeble strain,
> That so it breathe some spark of love's own glory,
> And crown my ardent toils with pleasant rest,
> And solace to each listener's troubled breast.
>
> Nor let the martial god be distant far,
> In his stern panoply of proof divine!
> Thou, Venus! beaming like thy fav'rite star,
> With joyous looks, and eyes that warmly shine,
> And thou, her son, victor in amorous war!
> Strengthen my hand in this my high design,
> And swell the voice that pours young passion's sighs,
> And bitterest tears, with too few extacies!

La Theseide was imitated by Chaucer, the father of English poetry. When the lapse of time had rendered his work almost unintelligible to the generality of readers, Dryden reproduced it in his poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, which was well received. It must be confessed, however, that the exaggerated passions, improbable incidents, and long tiresome descriptions of this fable, render the perusal of the original, and of the imitations, equally difficult.

were composed, they were, however, equally remarkable for their extensive information and for the clearness of their arrangement ; but the style is by no means so pure and elegant as that of Petrarch.

But, while the claim to celebrity, in these great men, is restricted to the Italian poetry of Petrarch and to the novels of Boccaccio, our gratitude to them is founded on stronger grounds. They felt more sensibly than any other men, that enthusiasm for the beauties of antiquity, without which we in vain strive to appreciate its treasures ; and they each devoted a long and laborious life to the discovery and the study of ancient manuscripts. The most valued works of the ancients were at that time buried among the archives of convents, scattered at great distances, incorrect and incomplete, without tables of contents or marginal notes. Nor did those resources then exist, which printing supplies, for the perusal of works with which we are not familiar ; and the facilities which are afforded by previous study, or the collation of the originals with each other, were equally wanting. It must have required a powerful intellect to discover, in a manuscript of Cicero, for example, without title or commencement, the full meaning of the author, the period at which he wrote, and other circumstances, which are connected with his subject ; to correct the numerous errors of the copyists ; to supply the chasms, which, frequently occurring at the beginning and the end, left neither title nor divisions nor conclusions, nor any thing that might serve as a clue for the perusal ; in short, to determine how one manuscript, discovered at Heidelberg, should perfect another, discovered at Naples. It was, in fact, by long and painful journies, that the scholars of those days accomplished themselves for this task. The copying a manuscript, with the necessary degree of accuracy, was a work of great labour and expense. A collection of three or four hundred volumes was, at that time, considered an extensive library ; and a scholar was frequently compelled to seek, at a great distance, the completion of a work, commenced under his own roof.

Petrarch and Boccaccio, in their frequent travels, obtained copies of such classics as they found in their route. Among other objects, Petrarch proposed to himself to collect all the works of Cicero ; in which he succeeded, after a lapse of

many years. Boccaccio, with a true love of letters, introduced the study of the Greek to the Italians, not only with the view of securing the interests of commerce or of science, but of enriching their minds, and extending their researches to the other half of the ancient world of letters, which had, till then, remained hidden from his contemporaries. He founded, in Florence, a chair for the teaching of the Greek language; and he himself invited thither, and installed as professor, Leontius Pilatus, one of the most learned Greeks of Constantinople. He received him into his own house, although he was a man of a morose and disagreeable temper; placed him at his table, as long as this professor could be induced to remain at Florence; inscribed himself among the first of his scholars, and procured at his own expence, from Greece, the manuscripts, which were thus distributed in Florence, and which served as subjects for the lectures of Leontius Pilatus. For the instruction of those days consisted in the public delivery of lectures with commentaries; and a book, of which there, perhaps, existed only a single copy, sufficed for some thousand scholars.

There is an infinite space between the three great men whose works we have just enumerated, and even the most esteemed of their contemporaries; and, though these latter have preserved, until the present day, a considerable reputation, yet we shall only pause to notice their existence, and the epoch to which they belong. Perhaps the most remarkable are the three Florentine historians of the name of Villani. Giovanni, the eldest, who died in the first plague, in 1348; Matteo, his brother, who died in the second plague, in 1361; and Filippo, the son of Matteo, who continued the work of his father to the year 1364, and who wrote a history of the literature of Florence, the first attempt of this kind, in modern times. But it is in another work that I have rendered homage to these three celebrated men, who were, for more than a century, my faithful guides in the history of Italy, and who, by their candour, patriotism, and ancient frankness, by their attachment to the cause of virtue and of freedom, and to all that is ennobling in man, have inspired me with so much personal affection, that in taking leave of them to prosecute, without their further aid, my dangerous voyage, I felt as if bidding adieu to my own friends. Two poets of this

age, shared with Petrarch the honours of a poetic coronation: Zanobi di Strada, whom the Emperor Charles IV. crowned at Pisa, in 1355, with great pomp, but whose verses have not reached us; and Coluccio Salutati, secretary of the Florentine republic, one of the purest Latinists, and most eloquent statesmen whom Italy in that age produced. The latter, indeed, did not live to enjoy the honour which had been accorded him by the Emperor, at the request of the Florentines. Coluccio died in 1406, at the age of seventy-six, before the day appointed for his coronation, and the symbol of glory was deposited on his tomb: as, at a subsequent period, a far more illustrious crown was placed on the tomb of Tasso.

Of the prose writers of Tuscany, Francho Sacchetti, born at Florence about the year 1335, and who died before the end of the century, after filling some of the first offices in the republic, approaches the nearest to Boccaccio. He imitated Boccaccio in his novels, and Petrarch in his lyric poems; but the latter were never printed, while of his tales there have been several editions. Whatever praise be due to the purity and eloquence of his style, we find his pages more valuable, as a history of the manners of the age, than attractive for their powers of amusement, even when the author thinks himself most successful. His two hundred and fifty-eight tales consist, almost entirely, of the incidents of his own time, and of his own neighbourhood; domestic anecdotes, which in general contain little humour; tricks, exhibiting little skill, and jests of little point; and we are often surprised to find a professed jester vanquished by the smart reply of a child or a clown, which scarcely deserves our attention. After reading these tales, we cannot help concluding that the art of conversation had not made, in the fourteenth century, an equal progress with the other arts; and that the great men, to whom we owe so many excellent works, were not so entertaining in the social intercourse of life, as many persons greatly their inferiors in merit.

Two poets of this time, of some celebrity, chose Dante for their model, and composed after him, in *terza rima*, long allegories, partly descriptive, partly scientific. Fazio de' Uberti in his *Dettamondo*, undertook the description of the universe, of which the different parts, personified in turns,

relate their history. Federigo Frezzi, Bishop of Foligno, who died in 1416, at the council of Constance, has, in his *Quadriregio*, described the four empires of love, satan, virtue, and vice. In both of these poets we meet, occasionally, with lines not unworthy of Dante; but they formed a very false estimate of the works of genius, when they regarded the *Divina Commedia* not as an individual poem, but as a species of poetry which any one might attempt.

The passionate study of the ancients, of which Petrarch and Boccaccio had given an example, suspended, in an extraordinary manner, the progress of Italian literature, and retarded the perfection of that tongue. Italy, after having produced her three leading classics, sunk, for a century, into inaction. In this period, indeed, erudition made wonderful progress; and knowledge became much more general, but sterile in its effects. The mind had preserved all its activity, and literary fame all its splendour; but the unintermitted study of the ancients had precluded all originality in the authors. Instead of perfecting a new language, and enriching it with works in unison with modern manners and ideas, they confined themselves to a servile copy of the ancients. A too scrupulous imitation thus destroyed the spirit of invention; and the most eminent scholars may be said to have produced in their eloquent writings, little more than college themes. In proportion as a man was qualified by his rank, or by his talents, to acquire a name in literature, he blushed to cultivate his mother tongue. He almost, indeed, forced himself to forget it, to avoid the danger of corrupting his Latin style: and the common people thus remained the only depositories of a language, which had exhibited so brilliant a dawn, and which had now again almost relapsed into barbarism.

The fifteenth century, so barren in Italian literature, was, nevertheless, a highly literary period. In no other age, perhaps, was the love of study so universal. Letters were powerfully supported by princes and by their subjects. All, who attached themselves to literature, were assured of fame; and the monuments of the ancient tongues, multiplied by the recently discovered press, exercised a great and lasting influence on the human mind. The sovereigns of Europe, at this brilliant period, rested their glory on the protection afforded to letters, on the classical education they had themselves

received, and on their intimate knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. The popes, who, in the preceding times, had turned the whole weight of superstition against study, became, in the fifteenth century, the most zealous friends and protectors, and the most munificent patrons of men of letters. Two of them were themselves scholars of the first distinction. Thomas di Sarzana, who was afterwards Nicholas V., (1447 to 1455), and Æneas Sylvius, who assumed the name of Pius II., (1458 to 1464), after having rendered themselves celebrated, in the world of letters, for their extraordinary endowments, were, in consequence of their literary merit, raised to the chair of St. Peter. The dukes of Milan, the same men whom history represents to us as the disturbers and tyrants of Lombardy, Filippo Maria, the last of the Visconti, and Francesco Sforza, the founder of a military monarchy, surrounded themselves, in their capital, with the most illustrious men in science and in letters, and accorded to them the most generous remunerations, and employs of the first confidence. The discovery of an ancient manuscript was to them, as well as to their subjects, a cause of rejoicing; and they interested themselves in questions of antiquity, and in philological disputes, as well as in affairs of state.

Two sovereign princes of less powerful families, the Marquis Gonzaga, of Mantua, and the Marquis D'Este, of Ferrara, endeavoured to supply what was wanting to them in power, by their active zeal and by the constant protection which they afforded to literature. They sought for and collected together men of letters from every part of Italy, and seemed to rival each other in lavishing upon them the richest gifts and the most flattering distinctions. To them, they entrusted exclusively the education of their children; and we should probably, in the present day, search in vain, in our most learned academies, for men who wrote Greek verse with so much elegance and purity as many of the princes of Mantua and Ferrara. At Florence, a wealthy merchant, Cosmo de' Medici, had acquired a degree of power which shook the constitution of the state; and his descendants were destined to substitute, in that city, the will of an individual for that of the people. In the midst of his vast projects of ambition, master of the monied credit of Europe, and almost the equal of the kings with whom he negotiated, Cosmo accorded, in

his house, an asylum to all the men of learning and artists of the age, converted his gardens into an academy, and produced a revolution in philosophy, by substituting the authority of Plato for that of Aristotle. His banks, which were extended over all Europe, and to the Mahomedan states, were devoted to literature as well as to commerce. His agents, at the same time, collected manuscripts and sold spices ; and the vessels, which arrived on his account from Constantinople, Alexandria, and Smyrna, in the several ports of Italy, were often laden with rich collections of Greek, Syrian, and Chaldean manuscripts. At the same time, Cosmo opened public libraries at Venice and at Florence. In the south of Italy, Alfonso V., a monarch of the race of Aragon, contended with the sovereigns of the northern states, of Italian descent, in his love of science. His secretaries, friends, and counsellors, consisted of men, whose names will always remain illustrious in the republic of letters ; and his reign is intimately connected with the literary history of Italy. The universities, which, two centuries before, had flourished so highly, were, it is true, paralyzed by persisting in their ancient methods and errors, and in a scholastic philosophy, which dazzled the mind, but perverted the judgment. But all men, who had then acquired a name in literature, were accustomed to open a school, which was often for them the path to fame, fortune, and office. The sovereigns of that age often chose for their ambassadors, or chancellors, the same individuals who educated youth, or illustrated the ancients ; and the public functions of these learned men interfered, only for a short space of time, with the equally noble objects of instruction. The passion for obtaining books for the purpose of forming libraries, and the prodigious price attached to a fine copy of a manuscript, awoke a spirit of invention to multiply them. The art of printing was discovered at a moment, of all others, when it was most wanted ; and to that necessity its invention may, in fact, be attributed. At any other epoch, even in the days of the greatest prosperity of Greece and of Rome, so great and urgent a necessity for multiplying the copies of books was never experienced. At no time, had the world possessed so considerable a number of manuscripts, which it was desirable to save from the destruction with which they seemed menaced. In no other time, could the invention of

printing have been rewarded with more munificence, and been more rapidly extended. John Guttemberg, of Mentz, who was the first to employ moveable characters, from 1450 to 1455, wished to hide the secret of his discovery, in order to insure to himself a greater profit. But, in 1465, it was introduced into Italy, and in 1469 into Paris; and, in a short time, those precious works, which were only attainable by infinite labour and expense, were multiplied by thousands, and placed within the reach of the public.

The men who flourished at this period, and to whom we owe the revival of Greek and Latin literature, the preservation and correction of all the monuments of antiquity, the knowledge of its laws, manners, and customs, of its religion and its language, do not properly belong to Italian literature: and we shall not make a point of describing their writings, their persons, or their lives, which were continually agitated by disputes. It will be sufficient to impress a few names on the memory of the reader, in gratitude for the eminent services which they have rendered to Europe, and in recollection of a species of glory which has passed away.

John of Ravenna, who, in his youth, had been a pupil of Petrarch, already then in years, and who had received many benefits at his hands, insufficient, however, to triumph over his fickleness of temper; and Emanuel Chrysoloras, a learned Greek, who came as ambassador into Italy, to implore succour against the Turks, and who was eventually detained in that country by the zeal with which his lectures were attended, were the two teachers who, at the close of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, communicated to Italy a passion for the study of Greek letters, and who almost alone gave rise to that constellation of learned men which illuminated the fifteenth century. Among these may be mentioned Guarino Veronese (1370-1460,) ancestor of the author of the Pastor Fido, and the progenitor of a race wholly devoted to letters. He commenced his study of Greek at Constantinople, and brought from thence on his return two cases of Greek manuscripts, the fruit of his indefatigable researches. One of these was lost at sea, on the shipwreck of the vessel: and the chagrin at losing such a literary treasure, acquired by so much labour, had the effect of turning the hair of Guarino grey, in one night. He was tutor to Lionel, Marquis of Este

the most beloved and the most liberal of the sovereigns of Ferrara. He was also interpreter for the Greeks, at the Councils of Ferrara and Florence: but these distinguished occupations did not divert him from his task of instruction, and he continued his lectures, at Ferrara, to the age of ninety. His principal works consist of translations from the Greek, and commentaries on the writings of the ancients.

Giovanni Aurispa, a Sicilian, born in 1369, and who died in 1460, followed the same career as Guarino, through the course of an equally long life, and with the same success. Like him, he commenced his studies in Greece, and brought back with him to Venice two hundred and thirty manuscripts, containing the works of many distinguished writers of antiquity, which would have been otherwise lost. For a long time, he gave lectures in Florence, Ferrara, and Rome, where he was apostolic secretary, and, again, at Ferrara, where he died. There remain of him, some translations in Greek and Latin, some letters, and some Italian poetry; but it was to his instructions, more particularly, and to his zeal for study, that he owed the great influence which he obtained over his age, and the celebrity deservedly attached to his name.

Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439,) a monk, who afterwards became the head of the order of the Camaldoli, was one of the most illustrious pupils of Emanuel Chrysoloras, a friend of Cosmo de' Medici, and one of the founders of the school of belles lettres and philosophy in Florence. He was connected with all the distinguished men of his age, and we derive much information respecting them from his letters. He travelled from convent to convent, and took a leading share in the political events of the age, for the interests of the order of which he was the chief. But the cause of letters gained both by his journeys and by his correspondence; whilst he laboured to preserve or establish the peace of the church, and of society in general, by his conciliatory spirit. The mildness and benignity of his character were particularly valuable, at a time when the generality of scholars put no restraint on their violent tempers, and abandoned themselves to vindictive and outrageous quarrels.

The celebrated Lionardo Bruno d'Arezzo, better known under the name of Lionardo Aretino (1369-1444), was also a

scholar of Emanuel Chrysoloras. He was apostolic secretary to four popes, and ultimately chancellor of the Florentine republic; and was not only one of the most learned, but also one of the most amiable, men of the fifteenth century, equally dignified and respectable in morals and in manners. He has left, besides a number of translations in Greek and Latin, some letters and Latin poems, and a History of Florence to the year 1404, written with correct judgment, and in an elegant and pure style, but with too evident an imitation of Livy. In consequence of this unreasonable fondness for relating the events of modern times in the style of antiquity, the historians of the fifteenth century deprived their works of all nature and originality.

Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) was the friend of Lionardo, and continued his history. He also was a pupil of John of Ravenna, and of Emanuel Chrysoloras. From the year 1402, and during more than fifty years, he was writer of the apostolic letters; an employ which brought him little fortune, but which did not require his residence in Rome. Poggio was thus enabled to travel frequently, not only in Italy, but in Germany, in France, and in England. In his journeys, he discovered a great number of manuscripts, in danger of perishing in the hands of the monks, who were insensible to their value, and who had banished them to the damp and obscure recesses of their convents. In this manner, he redeemed for posterity the works of Quintilian, Valerius Flaccus, Vitruvius, and others. He was tenderly attached to Cosmo de' Medici; and, when that illustrious citizen was recalled to Florence, he fixed his own residence there, in the year 1435. Florence, indeed, was his native place, but, until that period, he had always lived absent from it. He was appointed, in 1453, chancellor of the republic. Shortly afterwards, he was elected into the number of the *Priori delle arti*, or presidents of the trading companies; and he died, loaded with honours, in his native city, on the thirtieth of October, 1459. A monument was erected to his memory in the church of Santa Croce, near those of other great men, who form the boast of Florence.

Poggio was one of the most voluminous writers of his age, and united a profound genius, philosophy, fervour of imagination, and eloquence, to the most extensive attainments. Next

to his History of Florence, which extends from 1350 to 1455, and which is, perhaps, his best work, may be ranked many of his philosophical dialogues and letters, in which the most noble and elevated sentiments prevail. His memory, indeed, derives less honour from his too celebrated Book of *Facetiæ*, which he published in his seventieth year; and in which, with a sarcastic gaiety, he outrages, without restraint, all good manners and decorum. Nor are the numerous invectives, which, in his literary quarrels, he addressed to Francesco Filelfo, to Lorenzo Valla, to George of Trebizond, and to many others, less exceptionable. In an age when literature was confined to scholastic erudition, taste exercised on it little influence. Society could not repress the malignant passions, nor could respect for the other sex inspire a sense of propriety. We are astonished and disgusted at the odious accusations, with which these scholastic champions attack each other; reproaching their opponents with theft and fraud, poisonings and perjury, in the most opprobrious language. In order to justify an insolent and gross expression, they did not consider whether it were consistent with a due observance of decorum, but merely whether it were authorized by its pure Latinity; and, in these calumnious aspersions, they were much less solicitous about the truth or probability of their charges, than about the classical propriety of their vituperative epithets.

The man, whose life was most agitated by these furious literary quarrels, was Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481), the rival in reputation, and the declared enemy, of Poggio Bracciolini. Born at Tolentino, in 1398, he early distinguished himself by his erudition, and, at the age of eighteen, was appointed professor of eloquence at Padua. He relinquished that situation to go to Constantinople, to perfect himself in the Greek language. He repaired thither, in 1420, with a diplomatic mission from the Venetians, and was afterwards employed on others, to Amurath II., and the Emperor Sigismund. Having married a daughter of John Chrysoloras, who was allied to the Imperial family of the Palæologi, this noble alliance intoxicated the mind of a man already too vain of his knowledge, and who considered himself to be the first genius, not only of his own, but of every age. On his return to Italy, his ostentatious disposition exposed him to numerous distresses

notwithstanding the liberality with which, in many cities, he was rewarded for his instructions. At the same time, the violence and asperity of his character procured him many bitter enemies. Not content with literary altercations, he interfered also in political disputes, although, in these, he was not actuated by any noble feelings. He pretended that Cosmo de' Medici had twice intended his assassination, and he, in his turn, attempted the life of Cosmo. He published his invectives in all the cities of Italy, loading, with the heaviest accusations, the enemies whom he had drawn on himself. After the death of his first wife, he married a second, and subsequently a third at Milan, where he resided a considerable time, at the court of the Sforza family. He died on the thirty-first of July, 1481, on his return to Florence, to which place he was recalled by Lorenzo de' Medici. In the midst of these continual disquiets, Filelfo, however, laboured with indefatigable activity for the advancement of literature. He left behind him a prodigious number of translations, dissertations, and philosophical writings and letters ; but he contributed still more to the progress of study by his lectures, and by the treasures of his knowledge, which he displayed before four or five hundred scholars at a time, to whom he gave instruction on various subjects, four or five times repeated in the course of one day.

Lorenzo Valla is the last of these celebrated philologists whom we shall here notice. Born at Rome, at the close of the fourteenth century, he there completed his early studies. He was afterwards professor of eloquence at Pavia, until about the year1431, when he attached himself to Alfonso V. He opened, at Naples, a school of Greek and Roman eloquence ; but, not less irascible than Filelfo and Poggio, he engaged with them and others in violent disputes, of which the written invectives left us by these scholars form a lamentable proof. He composed many works, on history, criticism, dialectics, and moral philosophy. His two most celebrated productions are, a History of Ferdinand, King of Aragon, father of Alfonso, and the *Elegantiæ Linguæ Latinæ*. He died at Naples, in 1457.

The attention of the literary men of the fifteenth century was wholly engrossed by the study of the dead languages, and of manners, customs, and religious systems, equally extinct.

The charm of reality was, of course, wanting to works which were the result of so much research and labour. All these men whom we have noticed, and to whom we owe the discovery and preservation of so many valuable works, present to our observation, boundless erudition, a just spirit of criticism, and nice sensibility to the beauties and defects of the great authors of antiquity. But we look in vain for that true eloquence, which is more the fruit of an intercouse with the world, than of a knowledge of books ; and these philologists professed too blind a veneration for every thing belonging to antiquity, to point out what was worthy of admiration, or to select what was deserving of imitation. They were still more unsuccessful in poetry, in which their attempts, all in Latin, are few in number ; and their verses are harsh and heavy, without originality or vigour. It was not until the period when Italian poetry began to be again cultivated, that Latin verse acquired any of the characteristics of genuine inspiration.

The first man to whom may, perhaps, be attributed the restoration of Italian poetry, was, at the same time, one of the greatest men of his own and succeeding ages. This was Lorenzo de' Medici, chief of the Florentine republic, and arbiter of the whole political state of Italy (1448-1492). Lorenzo the Magnificent had written his first poems, before he was twenty years of age. A whole century had elapsed since Petrarch and Boccaccio, renouncing subjects of love, had ceased to cultivate Italian verse ; and, during this long interval, no poet worthy of commemoration had appeared. Lorenzo attempted to restore the poetry of his country, to the state in which Petrarch had left it ; but this man, so superior by the greatness of his character, and by the universality of his genius, did not possess the talent of versification in the same degree as Petrarch. In his love verses, his sonnets, and *canzoni*, we find less sweetness and harmony. Their poetical colouring is less striking; and it is remarkable, that they display a ruder expression, more nearly allied to the infancy of the language. On the other hand, his ideas are more natural, and are often accompanied by a great charm of imagination. We are presented with a succession of the most delightful rural pictures, and are surprised to find the statesman so conversant with country life. His works consist of one hundred and forty sonnets, and about twenty *canzoni*, almost all com

posed in honour of Lucretia de' Donati. He has not, however, named her; and he seems to have chosen her only as the object of a poetical passion, and as the subject of his verse. He has celebrated her with a purity not unworthy of Petrarch, and with a delicacy which was not always observed in his other attachments. But Lorenzo did not confine himself to lyric poetry. He attempted all kinds, and manifested in all, the versatility of his talents and the exuberance of his imagination. His poem of *Ambra*, intended to celebrate the delicious gardens, which he had planted in an island of the Ombrone, and which were destroyed by an inundation of that river, is written in beautiful octave verse. In his *Nencia da Barberino*, composed in the rustic dialect of Tuscany, he celebrates, in stanzas full of natural simplicity, gaiety, and grace, the charms of a peasant girl. His *Altercazione* is a philosophical and moral poem, in which the most sublime truths of the Platonic philosophy are displayed with equal clearness and sublimity. Lorenzo has also left, in his *Beoni*, an ingenious and lively satire against drunkenness; and in his Carnival songs, couplets of extreme gaiety, that accompanied the triumphal feasts which he gave to, and shared with, the people. In his *Canzoni a ballo*, we have other verses, which he sung himself, when he took a part in the dances exhibited in public; and in his *Orazioni* we find sacred hymns, which belong to the highest order of lyric poetry.

Such was the brilliant imagination, and such the grace and versatility of talent, of a man to whom poetry was but an amusement, scarcely noticed in his splendid political career; who, concentrating in himself all the powers of the republic, never allowed the people to perceive that they had relinquished their sovereignty; who, by the superiority of his character and of his talents, governed all Italy as he governed Florence, preserving it in peace, and averting, as long as he lived, those calamities with which, two years after his death, it was overwhelmed; who was, at the same time, the patron of the Platonic philosophy, the promoter of literature, the fellow-student of the learned, the friend of philosophers and poets, and the protector of artists; and who kindled and fanned the flame of genius in the breast of Michael Angelo.

CHAPTER XII.

POLITIANO, PULCI, BOIARDO, AND ARIOSTO.

The century which, after the death of Petrarch, had been devoted, by the Italians, to the study of antiquity, during which literature experienced no advance, and the Italian language seemed to retrograde, was not, however, lost to the powers of imagination. Poetry, on its first revival, had not received sufficient nourishment. The fund of knowledge, of ideas, and of images, which she called to her aid, was too restricted. The three great men of the fourteenth century, whom we first presented to the attention of the reader, had, by the sole force of their genius, attained a degree of erudition, and a sublimity of thought, far beyond the spirit of their age. These qualities were entirely personal; and the rest of the Italian bards, like the Provençal poets, were reduced, by the poverty of their ideas, to have recourse to those continual attempts at wit, and to that mixture of unintelligible ideas and incoherent images, which render the perusal of them so fatiguing. The whole of the fifteenth century was employed in extending, in every sense, the knowledge and resources of the friends of the muses. Antiquity was unveiled to them in all its elevated characters, its severe laws, its energetic virtues, and its beautiful and engaging mythology; in its subtle and profound philosophy, its overpowering eloquence, and its delightful poetry. Another age was required to knead afresh the clay for the formation of a nobler race. At the close of the century, a divine breath animated the finished statue, and it started into life.

It was in the society of Lorenzo de' Medici, in the midst of his friends and of the objects of his protection, that several of those men of genius appeared, who shed so brilliant a glory on Italy, in the sixteenth century. Amongst these, the most distinguished rank may be assigned to Politiano, who opened, to the Italian poets, the career of epic and lyric fame.

Angelo Politiano was born on the twenty-fourth of July, 1454, at Monte Pulciano (Mons Politianus), a castle, of which he adopted the name, instead of that of Ambrogini,

borne by his father. He applied himself with ardour to those scholastic studies which engaged the general mind, in the fifteenth century. Some Latin and Greek epigrams, which he wrote between the age of thirteen and seventeen, surprised his teachers, and the companions of his studies. But the work which introduced him to Lorenzo de' Medici, and which had the greatest influence on his age, was a poem on a tournament, in which Julian de' Medici was the victor, in 1468. From that time, Lorenzo received Politiano into his palace; made him the constant companion of his labours and his studies; provided for all his necessities, and soon afterwards confided to him the education of his children. Politiano, after this invitation, attached himself to the more serious studies of the Platonic philosophy, of antiquity, and of law; but his poem in honour of the tournament of Julian de' Medici, remains a monument of the distinguished taste of the fifteenth century.

This celebrated fragment commences like a large work. In fact, if Politiano had merely intended to celebrate the tournament in which Julian was victor, he would have found it very difficult to finish his poem; since, in one hundred and fifty stanzas, forming a book and a half, he only arrives at the first preparations for the tournament. But I willingly suppose that his design was of a more extended nature, and more worthy of the epic muse. He probably intended, after the death of Julian, to which he alludes in the second book, to combine, in a chivalrous description, all that could be found interesting in the character of this young prince, whose loves he was recording. Politiano, indeed, must soon have discovered that he had not made choice of a hero, who could excite either his own admiration or that of his reader. Events and actions were wanting; and this was, doubtless, his reason for abandoning his work, almost at its commencement. But this mere opening of a long poem will not suffer from comparison with those of the greatest writers; and neither Tasso nor Ariosto exceed Politiano in his management of the octave stanza, in the spirit of his narration, in the grace and vivacity of his colouring, and in his union of an enchanting harmony with the richest and most varied description. The poet represents Julian in the flower of his youth, devoted to the brilliant career of manly exercises, aspiring after glory, and

contemning the shafts of love.* He allures the young companions of his games and exercises, from a weakness which he despises; he conducts them to the chace; and, himself, the most agile, the most ardent, and the bravest of all, he traverses the forest, and slays the fiercest of its inhabitants. But love, indignant to see his empire thus contemned, draws him off from the pursuit, by the means of a beautiful white hind, which separates him from his comrades, and leads him, by various windings, into a flowery mead, where Simonetta presents herself to his view, while the enchanted hind vanishes in air.†

* Nel vago tempo di sua verde etate,
Spargendo ancor pe 'l volto il primo fiore,
Ne avendo il bel Giulio ancor provate
Le dolci acerbe cure che dà amore,
Viveasi lieto in pace, in libertate,
Talor frenando un gentil corridore
Che gloria fù de' Ciciliani armenti;
Con esso a correr contendea co' venti.

Ora a guisa saltar di leopardo,
Or dentro fea rotarlo in brieve giro;
Or fea ronzar per l' aer un lento dardo,
Dando sovente a fere agro martiro;
Cotal viveasi 'l giovane gagliardo,
Ne pensando al suo fato acerbo e diro,
Ne certo ancor de' suoi futuri pianti,
Solea gabbarsi de gli afflitti amanti.

Ah! quante ninfe per lui sospirorno!
Ma fù sì altero sempre il giovinetto
Che mai le ninfe amanti lo piegorno,
Mai potè riscaldarsi 'l freddo petto.
Facea sovente pe' boschi soggiorno:
Inculto sempre e rigido in aspetto,
Il volto difendea dal solar raggio,
Con ghirlanda di pino, o verde faggio.

Lib. 1 *Stanz.* 8

† Candida è ella, e candida la vesta,
Ma per di rose e fior dipinta e d' erba;
Lo inanellato crin de l'aurea testa
Scende in la fronte umilmente superba.
Ridele attorno tutta la foresta,
E quanto può sue cure disacerba,
Ne l'atto regalmente è mansueta,
E pur col ciglio le tempeste acqueta.

Folgoran gli occhi d'un dolce sereno,
Ove sue faci tien Cupido ascose:
L' aer d' intorno si fa tutto ameno
Ovunque gira le luci amorose;

Julian now sees only the fair Ligurian ; forgets the chace, and foregoes his resolves against the power of Love. Cupid, in the mean time, proud of his conquest, flies to the palace of his mother, in the Isle of Cyprus, and boasts of his success ; and the description of this enchanted palace has served as a model to Ariosto and to Tasso, for the enchanted domes of Alcina and of Armida.* This description may, perhaps, be too far extended, as the action of the poem is not accelerated by it, and the poet indulges himself too far in his pictures of mythology. In the second book, Simonetta, arrayed in the armour of Pallas, appears to Julian in a dream. She reminds him, that it is only by valour that a hero should

Di celeste letizia il volto ha pieno,
Dolce dipinto di ligustri e rose.
Ogni aura tace al suo parlar divino,
E canta ogni augelletto in suo latino.

Lib. 1. *Stanz.* 43.

* Vagheggia Cipri un dilettoso monte
Che del gran Nilo i sette corni vede,
Al primo rosseggiar de l'orizzonte,
Ove poggiar non lice a mortal piede.
Nel giogo un verde colle alza la fronte,
Sott' esso aprieo un lieto pratel siede ;
U' scherzando tra fior, lascive aurette
Fan dolcemente tremolar l'erbette.

Corona un muro d' or l' estreme sponde
Con valle umbrosa di schietti arboscelli,
Ove in sù rami, fra novelle fronde.
Cantan gli loro amor soavi augelli,
Sentesi un grato mormorio de l' onde
Che fan duo freschi e lucidi ruscelli,
Versando dolce con amar liquore,
Ove arma l' oro de suoi strali amore.

Ne mai le chiome del giardino eterno
Tenera brina o fresca neve imbianca :
Ivi non osa entrar ghiacciato verno ;
Non vento l' erba o gli arboscelli stanca.
Ivi non volgon gli anni il lor quaderno :
Ma lieta primavera mai non manca,
Che i suoi crin biondi e crespi a l' aura spiega
E mille fiori in ghirlandetta lega.

[For a translation of the above stanzas, and of some others, the reader is referred to the note at the conclusion of the present chapter.—*Tr.*]

think of obtaining her heart. Julian awakes, amidst the aspirations of glory and of love.*

But here Politiano has relinquished his work, and leaves us to regret, either that a subject, of a more noble nature, and more exempt from flattery, had not animated his genius, or that too severe a taste caused him to abandon that which he had already chosen.

Politiano had the honour of reviving, on the modern stage, the tragedies of the ancients ; or rather, he created a new kind of pastoral tragedy, a description of poetry on which Tasso did not disdain to employ his genius. The fable of Orpheus, *Favola di Orfeo*, of Politiano, was performed at the court of Mantua, in 1483, on occasion of the return of the Cardinal Gonzaga. It was composed in two days. It is not without regret that we contemplate the fine genius of Politiano. Before the age of nineteen, without a model or a predecessor, he had successfully attempted the epic and tragic

* Cosi dicea Cupido, e gia la gloria
Scendea giù folgorando ardente vampo,
Con essa poesia, con essa istoria
Volavan tutte accese del suo lampo.
Costei parea che ad acquistar vittoria
Rapisse Giulio orribilmente in campo,
E che l' arme di Palla alla sua donna
Spogliasse, e lei lasciasse in bianca gonna.

Poi Giulio di sue spoglie armava tutto,
E tutto fiammeggiar lo facea d'auro,
Quando era al fin del guereggiar condutto
Al capo gl' intrecciava oliva e lauro.
Ivi tornar parea sua gioia in lutto,
Vedeasi tolto il suo dolce tesauro,
Vedea sua ninfe, in trista nube avvolta,
Dagli occhi crudelmente essergli tolta.

L'aria tutta parea divenir bruna,
E tremar tutto de l' abisso il fondo ;
Parea sanguigna in ciel farsi la luna
E cader giù le stelle nel profondo ;
Poi vedea lieta in forma di fortuna,
Sorger sua ninfa, e rabbellirsi il mondo ;
E prender lei di sua vita governo
E lui con seco far per fama eterno.

Sotto cotali ambagi al giovanetto
Fù mostro de' suoi fati il leggier corso,
Troppo felice, se nel suo diletto
Non mettea morte acerba il crudel morso, etc.

walks of poetry, and has left us poems which, though little more than fragments, exact our high admiration. To what height of fame might he not have aspired, if he had not abandoned the Italian muse for Latin verse and for philosophical works, which are now no longer perused!

The universal homage paid to Virgil had a decided influence on the rising drama. The scholars were persuaded that this cherished poet combined in himself all the different kinds of excellence; and, as they created a drama before they possessed a theatre, they imagined that dialogue, rather than action, was the essence of the dramatic art. The Bucolics appeared to them a species of comedies or tragedies, less animated, it is true, but more poetical than the dramas of Terence and of Seneca, or, perhaps, of the Greeks. They attempted, indeed, to unite these two kinds; to give interest, by action, to the tranquil reveries of the shepherds, and to preserve a pastoral charm in the more violent expression of passion. The Orpheus, though divided into five acts, though mingled with chorus, and terminating with a tragic incident, is still rather an eclogue than a drama. The love of Aristæus for Eurydice; the flight and death of the latter, who is deplored by the dryads; the lamentation of Orpheus; his descent into hell; and his punishment at the hands of the Bacchantes, form the subject of the five acts, or rather of the five little sketches lightly strung together. Each act contains little more than from fifty to one hundred verses. A short dialogue explains the incidents between the acts; and he thus presents us with an ode, or a song, an elegy, or a lyric poem, which appears to have been the principal object of the author, and the essence of his poetry. He makes use of various metres, the *terza rima*, the octave stanza, and even the more involved couplets of the *canzoni*, for the dialogue; and the lyric pieces are almost all supported by a burden. Nothing, indeed, can less resemble our present tragedy, or that of the ancients. The Orpheus of Politiano, nevertheless, produced a revolution in poetry. The charm of the decorations, united to the beauty of the verse, and the music attached to the words, exciting interest at the same time that it gratified the mind, combined to lead the way to the most sublime enjoyment which the Muse can bestow, and gave birth to the dramatic art. At the same time, the

scrupulous imitation of antiquity, prepared, in another manner, the revival of the theatre. After the year 1470, the academy of learned men and poets of Rome undertook, for the better revival of the ancients, to represent, in Latin, some of the comedies of Plautus. This example, and that of Politiano, were soon followed. The taste for theatrical performances was renewed with greater eagerness, as it was regarded as an essential part of classical antiquity. It was not yet supported by the contributions of the spectators, but formed, as in Rome and in Greece, a part of the public, and often of the religious ceremonies. The sovereigns, who at this epoch placed all their glory in the protection of letters and of the arts, endeavoured to surpass each other, in erecting, on occasions of solemnity, a theatre, for the purpose of a single representation. The scholars and the court disputed for the honour of the parts, in the performance of the piece, which was sometimes translated from the Greek or Latin, and at other times was the composition of some modern poet, in imitation of the ancients. Italy boasted of exhibiting, annually, two theatrical representations: the one at Ferrara or at Milan, the other at Rome or at Naples. All the neighbouring princes, within reach, repaired thither, with their courts and retinue. The magnificence of the spectacle, the enormous cost, and the gratitude for an unbought pleasure, disarmed the severe judgment of the public. The records of the Italian cities, in presenting to us the recollection of these representations, speak of them always in terms of unqualified admiration. Thus, it was less the applause of the public than the restoration of the classics, which the poets had in view in their compositions. They confined themselves to the most faithful copy of the ancients; and the imitation of Seneca being equally classical with that of Sophocles, many of the first dramatic attempts of the poets of the fifteenth century, contain tumid declamations, without either action or interest, and all the faults of the Roman tragedies.

About the same time, that style of poetry which was destined to form the glory of Ariosto, began to be cultivated. Luigi Pulci, a Florentine, the youngest of three brothers, all poets, composed and read, at the table of Lorenzi de' Medici, his *Morgante Maggiore;* and Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count

of Scandia, wrote his *Orlando Innamorato.* Both these poems are chivalrous romances in verse, or rather in stanzas of eight verses, of the form which became peculiar to the epic poetry of Italy; but neither the one nor the other can merit the name of an epic poem. The chivalrous romances, composed for the most part in French, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were early circulated in Italy, and we learn from Dante, that they were already very much read in his day. In their origin, they accorded with the vivacity of the prevailing religious sentiment, with the violence of the passions, and with the taste for adventures, which animated the Christians of the first crusades. The general ignorance of the times favoured the powers of imagination. The vulgar looked rather to some supernatural agency, than to nature, for the explication of events, and admitted the marvellous, as a part of the system to which their daily terrors and hopes had habituated them. At the close of the fifteenth century, when the poets possessed themselves of all the old romances of chivalry, in order to give a variety to the adventures of their heroes, and to versify these legends, the belief in the marvellous was much diminished; and the warriors, who still bore the names and the armour of knights, were far from calling to recollection the loyalty, the true love, and the valour of the ancient Paladins. Thus, the adventures which the ancient romancers recounted with an invincible gravity, could not be repeated by the Italians, without a mixture of mockery; and the spirit of the age did not admit, in the Italian language, a subject entirely serious. He who made pretensions to fame, was compelled to write in Latin. The choice of the vulgar tongue was the indication of a humorous subject; and the Italian language had, in fact, adopted, since the time of Boccaccio, a character of *naïveté* mingled with satire, which still remains, and which is particularly remarkable in Ariosto.

It was not all at once that the romantic poets of Italy arrived at a just measure, in the mixture of humour with fabulous narrative. Luigi Pulci (1431-1487) in his Morgante Maggiore, which first appeared in 1485, is alternately vulgar and burlesque, serious and insipid, or religious. The principal characters of his romance are the same which first appeared in the fabulous chronicle of Turpin, and in the

romances of Adenez, in the thirteenth century. His real hero is Orlando, rather than Morgante. He takes up the Paladin of Charlemagne, at the moment when the intrigues of Ganelon de Mayence compel him to fly from the court. One of the first adventures of Orlando is a combat with three giants, who lay siege to an abbey. Two of these he kills, and makes the third, Morgante, prisoner : converts and baptizes him ; and thenceforth selects him as his brother in arms, and the partaker in all his adventures. Although this romance consists entirely of warlike encounters, we do not find in it that enthusiasm of valour which captivates in Ariosto, and in the old romancers. Orlando and Rinaldo are not vanquished, but they do not inspire us with a confidence in their invincibility. Morgante alone, armed with the hammer of a huge bell, crushes all that he encounters ; but his supernatural strength less exalts his bravery than his brutality. On the other hand, throughout the poem, a secondary part is assigned to the women. We do not find it imbued with that gallantry and devotion, which we are accustomed to consider as the characteristic trait of chivalry; and in this we have, perhaps, nothing to regret, as the habitual coarseness of the language of Pulci was little suited to the delineation of tender sentiments. The critics of Italy extol him for the purity of his style ; but it consists only in his fidelity to the Tuscan dialect, of which he adopted the proverbs, and all the vulgar expressions.* This poem of

* Pulci commences all his cantos by a sacred invocation, and the interests of religion are constantly intermingled with the adventures of his story, in a manner capricious and little instructive. We know not how to reconcile this monkish spirit with the semi-pagan character of society under Lorenzo de' Medici, nor whether we ought to accuse Pulci of gross bigotry or of profane derision. This mixture of religion, of affected sublimity, of solemn insipidity, and of vulgar expression, will sufficiently appear from the opening of the ninth canto :

O Felice alma d' ogni grazia piena,
Fida colonna, e speme graziosa,
Vergine sacra, umile e Nazzarena,
Perche tu se' di Dio nel cielo sposa,
Con la tua mano infino al fin mi mena,
Che di mia fantasia truovi ogni chiosa
Per la tua sol benignità ch' è molta,
Accio che 'l mio contar piaccia a chi ascolta.

Febo

twenty-eight cantos, each canto containing from one to two hundred stanzas, after having satiated us with the recital of combats against the Moors, and of ill-connected adventures, terminates with the death of Orlando at Roncesvalles, and the discovery and punishment of the treachery of Ganelon.

The Count Boiardo, a statesman, governor of Reggio, and attached to the court of Hercules I. of Ferrara (1430-1494), composed about the same time as Pulci, his Orlando Innamorato, drawn nearly from the same sources; but his death, which occurred in 1494, prevented its completion, and his poem was not printed until the following year. This poem, which is only known, at the present day, as improved by Berni, who remodelled it sixty years afterwards, is more attractive than that of Pulci, from the variety and novelty of

Febo avea già ne l'Oceano il volto,
E bagnava fra l' onde i suoi crin d'auro,
E dal nostro emispero aveva tolto
Ogni splendor, lasciando il suo bel lauro,
Dal qual fù già miseramente sciolto :
Era nel tempo che più scalda il Tauro,
Quando il Danese et gli altri al padiglione
Si ritrovar del grande Erminione.

Erminion fe' far pel campo festa :
Parvegli questo buon cominciamento :
E Mattafolle avea drieto gran gesta
Di gente armata a suo contentamento,
E' ndosso aveva una sua sopravesta,
Dov' era an Macometto in puro argento :
Pel campo a spasso con gran festa andava,
Di sua prodezza ognun molto parlava.

E si doleva Mattafolle solo
Ch' Astolfo un tratto non venga a cadere
E minacciava in mezzo del suo stuolo,
E porta una fenice per cimiere;
Astolfo ne sare' venuto a volo
Per cadere una volta a suo piacere;
Ma Ricciardetto, che sapea l' omore
Non vuol per nulla ch' egli sbuchi fore.

Carlo mugghiando per la mastra sala
Com' un lion famelico arrabiato,
Ne va con Ganellon che batte ogni ala
Per gran letizia, e spesso ha simulate,
Dicendo; ah lasso, la tua fame cala
Or fusse qui Rinaldo almen tornato;
Che se ci fusse il conte e Ulivieri
Io sarei fuor di mille stran pensieri.

the adventures, the richness of the colouring, and the interest excited by the valour of the hero. The female sex, who form the soul of the chivalrous romance, appear here with due honour; and Angelica displays her charms, and exercises supreme power over the hearts of the knights.

All the Moorish and Christian warriors whose names have become almost historical, receive from Boiardo an existence and a character which they have ever since preserved. We are informed that he took the names of many of them, Gradasso, Sacripante, Agramante, and Mandricardo, from the vassals of his own fief of Scandiano, where these families still exist. It is added, that he was in want of a more high-sounding name for his redoubtable Moorish hero, and that, one day, whilst at the chace, the name of Rodomonte suggested itself to him. He instantly returned to his castle on the gallop, rang his bells, and fired his cannon, as for the solemnization of a festival; to the astonishment of the peasants, who had never before heard of this new saint. The style of Boiardo did not correspond with the vivacity of his imagination. It is negligent, and his verses are harsh and fatiguing; and it was not without reason that in the following age, it was thought necessary to remodel his work.*

* As the poem of Boiardo is become somewhat rare, I shall give, as a specimen of his style, the six first stanzas of his poem, which correspond to the first, fifth and ninth of Berni. In comparing them with the poem of the latter, we shall see how Berni has substituted his own facility and grace of expression, for the harsh and antiquated language of his predecessor. *(Edit. in* 4to. 1539.)

Signori e cavalier, che v' adunati
Per odir cose dilettosse e nove,
Stati attenti, quieti, et ascoltati
La bell' historia che 'l mio canto move;
Et odereti i gesti smisurati
L' alta fatica e le mirabil prove
Che fece il franco Orlando per amore,
Nel tempo del rè Carlo, imperatore.

Non vi par già, signor, maravigliosо
Odir cantar d'Orlando innamorato:
Che qualunque nel mondo è più orgoglioso
E d'amor vinto al tutto e soggiogato.
Ne forte braccio, ne ardire animoso,
Ne scudo o maglia, ne brando affilato,
Ne altra possanza può mai far diffesa
Ch' al fin non sia d'amor battuta e presa.

Ques

The Italian language was thus at length perfected. The versification had received its rules; the stanza, most appropriate to epic poetry, had already been employed in works of length; the romances of chivalry were versified, and their marvellous adventures described in glowing colours. But, before Ariosto, the world had no idea of that inexpressible charm which the same adventures, recounted in the same stanza, were destined to receive from his pen. Genius, compared with talent, is like the oak compared with the low plants at its feet. The oak shoots, indeed, from the same earth, and is subject to the same laws of vegetation. But it aspires to a higher region of air; and, when we view it in single majesty, we forget that the humble shrubs, beneath its shade, are in the same class of organization.

Questa novella è nota a poca gente,
Perche Turpino istesso la nasco
Credendo forsi a quel conte valente
Esser le sue scritture dispettose,
Poi che contra ad amor pur fù perdente
Colui che vinse tutte l' altre cose :
Dico d'Orlando il cavalier adatto ;
Non più parole hormai, veniamo al fatto.

La vera historia di Turpin ragiona
Che regnava in la terra d'Oriente,
Di là dal India, un gran rè, di corona
Di stato e di ricchezze si potente,
E si gagliardo de la sua persona,
Che tutt 'il mondo stimava niente.
Gradasso nome avea quell' amirante
Ch' à cor di drago, e membra di gigante.

Et si come gli advien a gran signori,
Che pur quel voglion che non ponno avere,
E quando son difficultà maggiori
La disiata cosa ad ottenere,
Pongon il regno spesso in grand' errori,
Ne posson quel che voglion possedere,
Cosi bramava quel pagan gagliardo
Sol Durindana e 'l bon destrier Baiardo.

Onde per tutt' il suo gran tenitoro
Fece la gente ne l'arme assembrare ;
Che ben sapeva quel, che per tesoro
Ne 'l brando ne 'l corsier potria 'quistare ;
Duo mercadanti si erano coloro
Che vendean le sue merci troppo care ;
Però destina di passar in Franza
Et acquistarle con sua gran possanza.

Lodovico Ariosto was born on the eighth day of September, 1474, at Reggio, of which place his father was governor, for the Duke of Ferrara. He was intended for the study of jurisprudence, and, like many other distinguished poets, he experienced a long struggle between the will of his father, who was anxious that he should pursue a profession, and his own feelings, which prompted him to the indulgence of his genius. After five years of unprofitable study, his father at length consented to his devoting himself solely to literature. Ariosto then repaired to Rome; and it was there that he wrote in prose, before the year 1500, his comedy of *La Cassaria*, which, if not the earliest of the Italian comedies, may at least dispute this honour with the *Calandra* of Cardinal Bibbiena. He soon afterwards gave to the public a second comedy. *I Suppositi*. At the same time, we find him writing sonnets and love *canzoni*, in the manner of Petrarch; but we know not of whom he was enamoured, nor whether his passion was real or feigned. He was not of a melancholy or enthusiastic temperament; his conversation was that of a man of wit and judgment; his manners were polished and reserved, and no peculiarities betrayed the poet in him. The death of his father, in 1500, recalled him to Ferrara; and the smallness of his fortune induced him to attach himself to the service of the Cardinal Ippolito of Este, the second son of Hercules I. He accompanied the Cardinal in his travels, and was employed by him in many important negotiations. But, although skilful in business, he never pursued it without a secret regret; until, to the chagrin of the prince, he began to occupy himself with the trifling pursuits of poetry. About the year 1505, he commenced his *Orlando Furioso*, and he prosecuted this long task, for eleven years, amidst the constant distraction of business. He read his cantos, as they were finished, to his friends, and to persons of taste in Ferrara; and he paid a scrupulous attention to their criticisms, in order to polish and perfect his style. He was at length enabled, in the year 1516, to give the first edition of this poem, which now contains, in forty-six cantos, 4831 stanzas, and 38,648 verses. The reception given to the Orlando Furioso in Italy, was that of the most lively enthusiasm. Before the year 1532, four editions had appeared. The Cardinal Ippolito was the only person insensible to the merits of Ariosto; and, in 1517, they

separated with feelings of mutual distaste, on the poet refusing to accompany him into Hungary. A ruinous law-suit, however, constrained him, in a little time, to return again to court. Alfonso I. received him into his service, and gave him an employment under the government. Ariosto was commissioned to suppress the banditti of the Garfagnana, and we are assured that, amidst those lawless men, his poetical fame preceded him, and served him as a passport. The Duke of Ferrara gave him, at length, an appointment more congenial to his taste; that of superintending the erection of a theatre, and directing the magnificent representations which he intended to give. Ariosto employed, in this manner, the last years of his life. With a very limited income, he provided for his children. It is not known who was their mother, nor whether Ariosto was married to her. He died on the sixth of June, 1533. His brother Gabriel, and his son Virginio, erected a mounument to him, which, after many injuries, was restored, in 1612, by one of his descendants.

The Orlando Furioso of Ariosto is a poem universally known. It has been translated into all the modern tongues; and by the sole charm of its adventures, independently of its poetry, has long been the delight of the youth of all countries. It may therefore be taken for granted, that all the world is aware that Ariosto undertook to sing the Paladins and their amours at the court of Charlemagne, during the fabulous wars of this monarch against the Moors. If it were required to assign an historical epoch to the events contained in this poem, we must place them before the year 778, when Orlando was slain at the battle of Roncesvalles, in an expedition which Charlemagne made, before he was emperor, to defend the frontiers of Spain. But it may be conjectured, that the romance writers have confounded the wars of Charles Martel against Abdelrahman, with those of Charlemagne; and have thus given rise to the traditions of the invasion of France by the Saracens, and of those unheard-of perils, from which the West of Europe was saved by the valour of the Paladins. Every reader knows that Orlando, of all the heroes of Ariosto the most renowned for his valour, became mad, through love for Angelica; and that his madness, which is only an episode in this long poem, has given its name to the whole of the composition, although it is not until the twenty-third canto that Orlando is deprived of his senses.

It does not appear that Ariosto had the intention of writing a strictly epic poem. He had rejected the advice of Bembo, who wished him to compose his poem in Latin, the only language, in the opinion of the cardinal, worthy of a serious subject. Ariosto thought, perhaps, that an Italian poem should necessarily be light and sportive. He scorned the adopted rules of poetry, and proved himself sufficiently powerful to create new ones. His work may, indeed, be said to possess an unity of subject; the great struggle between the Christians and the Moors, which began with the invasion of France, and terminated with her deliverance. This was the subject which he had proposed to himself in his argument. The lives and adventures of his several heroes, contributed to this great action; and were so many subordinate episodes, which may be admitted in epic poetry, and which, in so long a work, cannot be considered as destroying the unity.

But Ariosto seems to have designedly thrown off the embarrassment of an unity of action. He takes up the subject and the hero, as left to him by Boiardo, in the Orlando Innamorato. He commences his poem in the midst of combats, and in a moment of universal confusion; and, notwithstanding this, he never makes us acquainted with the antecedent events, as if he thought that every one must have read the work of his predecessor. In fact, it is difficult to comprehend the disposition of the plot of the Orlando Furioso, if we have not previously perused the Orlando Innamorato, or if we are not, at least, masters of those traditions of romance, with which, in the time of Ariosto, the world was more familiar. He pays no regard to the simultaneous introduction of his principal personages. Towards the conclusion of the poem, we find new characters making their appearance, who engage our attention by important adventures; and who, so far from contributing to a developement, might serve equally well to fill a second poem of the same length as the first. In the course of the action, Ariosto, playing with his readers, seems to delight in continually misleading them, almost to the exhaustion of their patience; and allows them no opportunity of viewing the general subject of this poem, and of bringing the individual events under one view. On the contrary, he introduces each of his personages in their turn, as if he were the hero of the poem; and when he has drawn him into an embarrassing situation, and has suffi-

ciently excited the curiosity and anxiety of the reader, he abandons him, in his sportiveness, for some other character, or for another part of his story, wholly at variance with the first. In short, as he commenced, without assigning any reason why he so commenced, so he concludes with equal caprice, without informing us why he thus ends his poem. Many of his principal actors, it is true, are dead, and he moreover disposes of a great number of infidels, in his last cantos, in order to deliver himself, as it were, from their opposition. But in the course of his poem, he has so entirely accustomed us to see unnumbered hosts issuing from unknown deserts, and has so entirely carried our ideas beyond the boundaries of possibility, that we see without surprise, at the end of the forty-sixth canto, a new invasion of France by the Moors, no less formidable than the first; or, rather, a new war in the north, succeeding that of the south; and Ariosto has himself considered it in this light, in the commencement of a new poem, of which he has given us only five cantos. In this, the intrigues of Ganelon excite the Saxons to arms; and the most valiant of the knights, as Astolfo and Ruggiero, are again made captive by Alcina.*

The poem of Ariosto is, therefore, only a fragment of the history of the knights of Charlemagne and their amours; and it has neither beginning nor end, farther than any particular detached period may be said to possess them. This

* The fourth volume of M. Ginguené, which I had not an opportunity of seeing before the completion of this work, proves that the hero of Ariosto was Ruggiero, and not Orlando; and that the action of the poem ought to finish with the marriage of this fabulous ancestor of the house of Este with Bradamante. The secret design of the poet is thus explained, and brought before the eyes of the reader by the French critic, in a way as lively as his whole analysis is novel and engaging. We cannot but feel surprised, however, that if the object of the poem was solely to flatter the house of Este, the author should so far have concealed it, that it was not discovered until 300 years after his death, when the house had become extinct. At the same time, I cannot but regret the feeling thus induced. The value of these noble monuments of the human mind is diminished in our eyes, when we view them only as the vehicle of a flattering and ingenious compliment. It is surely quite sufficient for the sons of genius to consecrate some passages, by way of episode, to commemorate their benefactors, without converting the entire structure of their greatest works, into a theatre for the praises of those who are so little worthy of them.

want of unity essentially injures the interest and the general impression which we ought to derive from the work. But the avidity with which all nations, and all ages, have read Ariosto, even when his story is despoiled of its poetic charms by translation, sufficiently proves that he had the art of giving to its individual parts an interest which it does not possess as a whole. Above all, he has communicated to it a spirit of valour. In spite of the habitual absurdity of those chivalrous combats; in spite of the disproportion of the causes with their effects, and the raillery which seems inseparable from the narration of his battles, Ariosto always contrives to excite in us an enthusiasm and an intoxication of valour which create a love of enterprise in every reader. One of the most exalted enjoyments of man, consists in the full developement of his energies and power. The great art of the poet of romance is, to awaken a proper confidence in our own resources, by raising against his hero all the forces of nature and the spells of magic, and by exhibiting him as triumphant, by the superiority of his will and courage, over all the powers which had conspired his ruin.

In the world into which Ariosto transports us, we find also another source of enjoyment. This world, essentially poetic, in which all the vulgar interests of life are suspended; where love and honour are the only laws, and the only motives to action, and no factitious wants, no cold calculations chill the soul; where all the pains and all the disquietudes incident to our lot, and the inequalities of rank and of riches, are forgotten; this imaginary world charms away all our cares. We delight in making excursions into it, and in discovering in it a refuge from the distractions of real life. We derive, indeed, no instruction from these reveries; for the difference between the world of romance and the real world is such, that we cannot, in the one, make the least use of the lessons received from the other. It is, in fact, a remarkable characteristic of this species of poetry, that it is impossible to derive from it any kind of instruction. But we receive no little gratification from an occupation of the mind, on a subject which disclaims all admonition; and the dream of fancy, without any defined object, is, perhaps, the real essence of poetry, which ought never to be a means, but is in itself its only proper end.

It is true, indeed, that this world of romance is not the creation of Ariosto. The scene of the Orlando Furioso and that of the Orlando Innamorato, is exactly the same; and both authors, in availing themselves of the fabulous authority of Archbishop Turpin, have greatly profited by the brilliant invention of the French *Trouvères*, who, in the thirteenth century, composed many romances on the reign of Charlemagne: romances, which the wandering minstrels sung in the streets, after translating them into Italian verse, adapted to the taste of the common people. If, however, the representation of these ancient manners and the spirit of past times, was the work of several successive poets, yet Ariosto may be said to have completed this elegant and ingenious edifice. Chivalry, with him, shines forth in all its dignity, delicacy, and grace. The most exalted sentiments of honour, the protection of the feeble, a devoted respect for the female sex, and a scrupulous performance of promises, form the ruling spirit of the age into which he transports us. These sentiments are professed and felt by all his personages; and the fanciful race of knights have received from him a being and a name.

The magic and sorcery which pervade so great a portion of the poem of Ariosto, and which have been, in a manner, consecrated by the Christian poets, were borrowed chiefly from the Arabian tales, and had been transmitted to the Latins by their intercourse with the people of the East. The Christian warriors themselves had, indeed, many gross superstitions. They had faith in amulets, which they imagined could render them invulnerable. They believed that certain ill-omened words and charms could rob them of their strength. Continually accustomed to the use of arms, they were disposed to believe that those of the finest steel and the most approved temper, possessed in themselves something marvellous. But their superstition often carried with it a more sombre character. Their priests had inspired them with a thousand terrors, which were allied to a persecuting faith. Evil spirits and ghosts incessantly troubled their imaginations; and the same warriors, who had braved a thousand deaths in the field, were palsied with horror, in crossing a burial-place by night. This superstition, the result of the frightful pictures of Purgatory and Hell, is constantly found in the German poets;

but it is entirely strange to Ariosto and to the writers of romance, whom he had studied in Spanish and in French, with both of which languages he was intimately acquainted. The supernatural agency, which Ariosto employs, is divested of all terror. It is a brilliant heightening of the energies of man, which embodies the dreams of the imagination; the developement of the passions of the living, not the unnatural apparition of the dead. The Genii of the East, whom the most ancient fables have represented as subservient to the ring of Solomon, are the prototypes of the fairies of the North. Their power is exercised, as in the Arabian fables, in splendid creations, in a taste for the arts, and in a love of pleasure. In short, Alcina, Atlas, the ring of Angelica, and the Hippogriff, are the creations of Islamism; whilst the evil spirit of the mountain, and the spectre of the castle, who shakes his fetters and disturbs the hours of repose by his frightful visits, are European superstitions, allied to Christianity and to the mythology of Scandinavia and of Germany.

But, if Ariosto was not the inventor of the mythology which he has employed, nor of the heroes whom he has introduced, he has not the less exhibited, in his poem, the most brilliant imagination, and the most fertile invention. Each of his knights has his own story, and each of these stories forms a tissue of agreeable adventures, which awake the curiosity, and often excite the liveliest interest. Many of these adventures have furnished excellent dramatic subjects to succeeding poets; and the loves of Angelica and Medoro, those of Bradamante and Ruggiero, and of Genevra of Scotland, and Ariodante, form a world of traditionary poetry, not less fruitful than that of the Greeks.

It must be confessed, notwithstanding, that the dramatic powers of Ariosto do not equal his talent for description, and that his invention is more successful with regard to events than to character. He weaves a plot in the most novel and engaging manner. Our sympathy is excited from the commencement, and increases with the embarrassment of the situations. All the incidents are unexpected; almost all are of powerful interest; and the scene and action are vividly presented to our eyes. But, when the poet, at length, brings forward, as a speaker, the character which he has placed in the most difficult situation, he suddenly disappoints his

reader, and shows us that his imagination, and not his heart, was the source of composition. Thus, in the tenth canto, Bireno, the lover and husband of Olympia, arrives with her in a desert island. Already weary of her, he meditates her desertion, without her having the least presentiment of his perfidy. The small bay in which they disembark, the smiling spot on which they pitch their tent, and the serenity and confidence of Olympia, are admirably described. Whilst she sleeps, Bireno forsakes her; and the manner in which Olympia, at the break of day, half awaking from her slumbers, seeks for her lover in the couch which he has deserted, in the tent which he has abandoned, and on the border of the sea, and at length, from the point of a rock, sees his vessel, coursing the distant main, is painted with a delicacy of colouring, and a feeling of melancholy which profoundly penetrate the heart. But when Olympia speaks, and expresses, in seven stanzas, her regrets and her fears, she instantly checks our emotion; for, in these stanzas, there is not a single verse that responds to the throbbings of the heart. It is, doubtless, the same failing which deprives the personages of Ariosto of individual character. Even Orlando, the hero who gives his name to the poem, differs little from Rinaldo, Ruggiero, and Griffone, or from the valiant Saracen knights. In respect to valour and bodily prowess, as they are all raised above the level of nature, there are no means of distinguishing them from each other; and, as to characters, there are properly only two, to which all the rest may be referred. One half of the heroes, Christians as well as Pagans, are mild, generous, and benevolent; the other half, savage, arrogant, and cruel Nor are the characters of the women more happily delineated. That of Angelica scarcely leaves a recollection which we can seize. All the others are confounded together, except that of the Amazon Bradamante, the only one for whom we, perhaps. feel a personal interest.

The versification of Ariosto is more distinguished for grace, sweetness, and elegance, than for strength. The opening of all his cantos is adorned, throughout, with the richest poetry; and the language is so perfectly harmonious, that no poet, either before or after him, can be, in this point, compared to him. Every description is a picture; and the eyes of the reader follow the pen of the poet. As he always sports with

his subject, with his readers, and even with his style, he rarely soars, and never attempts that majestic flight which belongs to the epic muse. He even seeks facility and grace in negligence itself; and it often happens that he repeats many words of a verse in the following one, like the narrator of a tale, who repeats his words in order to collect his thoughts.* The words are frequently thrown together negligently, and as if by chance. We perceive that the most eligible words are not made use of; that parts of lines are inserted for the sake of the rhyme; and that the poet has been desirous of writing like an *Improvisatore*, who, in reciting, is carried away by his subject, and contents himself with filling up his verse, in order to arrive sooner at the event, or description which has possessed his imagination. This negligence, in others, would be considered as a fault; but Ariosto, who gave a high polish to his verses, and who designedly left these irregularities, has in his language, when he surrenders himself to the impulse of his genius, such an inimitable grace, that we gladly acquiesce in his negligence, and admit it as a proof of his happy genius, and of the truth of his narration.

We occasionally meet with passages highly pathetic, in this light and graceful poet. Thus, the circumstance which has given a name to the poem, the pangs of love which caused the madness of Orlando, is gradually developed with a truth, delicacy of sentiment, and eloquence of passion, wholly unrivalled. The Paladin of Charlemagne finds traced, on the rock of a grotto, verses by Medora, in which he extols his bliss, derived from the partial love of Angelica.†

CXI.

Three times, and four, and six, the lines imprest
Upon the stone that wretch perused, in vain
Seeking another sense than was exprest,
And ever saw the thing more clear and plain;
And all the while, within his troubled breast,
He felt an icy hand his heart-core strain.
With mind and eyes close fastened on the block,
At length he stood, not differing from the rock.

---

* Ma quivi giunse
In fretta un Messaggier che gli disgiunse.
Vi giunse un Messaggier, etc.

† [The extracts are from Mr. Rose's elegant and faithful Translation —*Tr.*]

CXII.

Then well-nigh lost all feeling; so a prey
Wholly was he to that o'ermastering woe.
This is a pang, believe the experienced say
Of him who speaks, which does all griefs outgo.
His pride had from his forehead passed away,
His chin had fallen upon his breast below;
Nor found he, so grief barred each natural vent,
Moisture for tears, or utterance for lament.

CXIII.

Stifled within, the impetuous sorrow stays,
Which would too quickly issue; so to abide
Water is seen, imprisoned in the vase,
Whose neck is narrow and whose swell is wide;
What time, when one turns up the inverted base,
Towards the mouth, so hastes the hurrying tide,
And in the streight encounters such a stop,
It scarcely works a passage, drop by drop.*

He still pauses; and he cannot believe that Angelica is faithless, until he is convinced by the recital of a shepherd, who had witnessed her infidelity. He flies into the forest, but in vain shuns the eye of man. He again sees the inscription on the rock, which converts his profound grief into rage.

CXXIX.

All night about the forest roved the count,
And, at the break of daily light, was brought
By his unhappy fortune to the fount,
Where his inscription young Medoro wrought.
To see his wrongs inscribed upon that mount,
Inflamed his fury so, in him was nought
But turned to hatred, phrenzy, rage, and spite;
Nor paused he more, but bared his faulchion bright;

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* Tre volte e quattro e sei lesse lo scritto
Quello infelice, e pur cercando in vano
Che non vi fosse quel che v' era scritto,
E sempre lo vedea più chiaro e piano.
Et ogni volta, in mezzo il petto affilitto,
Stringersi il cor sentia con fredda mano;
Rimase al fin con gli occhi e con la mente
Fissi nel sasso, al sasso indifferente.

Fù alhora per uscir del sentimento;
Si tutto in preda del dolor si lassa:
Credete a chi n' ha fatto esperimento
Che questo e 'l duol che tutti gl' altri passa.
Caduto gli era sopra il petto il mento,
La fronte priva di baldanza e bassa,
Ne potè aver, che 'l duol l' occupò tanto,
A le querele voce, humore al pianto. *Canto* 23. *st.* 112, 113.

CXXX.

Cleft through the writing; and the solid block,
Into the sky, in tiny fragments sped.
Wo worth each sapling and that caverned rock,
Where Medore and Angelica were read!
So scathed, that they to shepherd or to flock
Thenceforth shall never furnish shade or bed.
And that sweet fountain, late so clear and pure,
From such tempestuous wrath was ill secure.

CXXXI.

For he turf, stone, and trunk, and shoot, and lop,
Cast without cease into the beauteous source;
Till, turbid from the bottom to the top,
Never again was clear the troubled course.
At length for lack of breath, compelled to stop,
(When he is bathed in sweat, and wasted force,
Serves not his fury more) he falls and lies
Upon the mead, and, gazing upward, sighs.

CXXXII.

Wearied and woe-begone, he fell to ground,
And turned his eyes toward heaven; nor spake he aught,
Nor ate, nor slept, till in his daily round
The golden sun had broken thrice, and sought
His rest anew; nor ever ceased his wound
To rankle, till it marred his sober thought.
At length, impelled by phrenzy, the fourth day,
He from his limbs tore plate and mail away.

CXXXIII.

Here was his helmet, there his shield bestowed;
His arms far off; and, farther than the rest,
His cuirass; through the greenwood wide was strowed
All his good gear, in fine; and next his vest
He rent; and, in his fury, naked showed
His shaggy paunch, and all his back and breast.
And 'gan that phrenzy act, so passing dread,
Of stranger folly never shall be said.*

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* E stanco al fin, e al fin di sudor molle,
Poi che la lena vinta non risponde
A lo sdegno, al grave odio, a l'ardente ira,
Cade sul prato, e verso il ciel sospira.

Afflitto e stanco al fin cade ne l'herba,
E ficca gli occhi al cielo, e non fa motto;
Senza cibo e dormir così si serba
Che 'l sol esce tre volte, e torna sotto.
Di crescer non cessò la pena acerba
Che fuor del senno al fin l'ebbe condotto.
Il quarto dì, dal gran furor commosso,
E maglie e piastre si stracciò di dosso.

Canto 23, *st.* 131.

We find another passage equally pathetic, where Ariosto recounts, in the twenty-fourth canto, the death of Zerbino, the generous son of the King of Scotland, who had collected together the arms which Orlando, in his madness, had left scattered in the field. He formed them into a trophy, to be preserved for the Paladin, when he should be restored to reason, and was soon called on to defend them, as the Moor, Mandricardo, had possessed himself of Durandal, the famous sword of Orlando. But, in his combat with this cruel enemy, the arms were too unequal. Those of Mandricardo were charmed; and the armour of Zerbino was shattered by every stroke of the terrible Durandal. The two damsels, who follow the warriors, prevail on them, at length, to suspend their combat, and to separate; but Zerbino's wounds were too deep to be staunched. In the midst of the forest, alone with Isabel, his love, his blood flows fast, his anguish increases, and life ebbs away.

LXXV.

For to leave Durindana such misdeed
To him appeared, it past all other woes;
Though he could hardly sit upon his steed,
Through mighty loss of life-blood, which yet flows.
Now, when his anger and his heat secede,
After short interval, his anguish grows;
His anguish grows, with such impetuous pains,
He feels that life is ebbing from his veins.

LXXVI.

For weakness can the prince no further hie,
And so beside a fount is forced to stay:
Him to assist the pitying maid would try,
But knows not what to do, nor what to say.
For lack of comfort she beholds him die;
Since every city is too far away,
Where in this need she could resort to leech,
Whose suceour she might purchase or bescech.*

* Per debolezza più non potea gire,
Si che fermossi a piè d'una fontana;
Non sà che far, nè che si debba dire
Per aiutarlo la donzella humana.
Sol di disagio lo vede a morire,
Che quindi è troppo ogni città lontana,
Dove in quel punto al medico ricorra,
Che per pietade o per premio 'l soccorra.

Ella

LXXVII.

She, blaming Fortune, and the cruel sky,
Can only utter foud complaints and vain.
" Why sank I not in ocean," (was her cry,)
" When first I reared my sail upon the main?"
Zerbino, who on her his languid eye
Had fixt, as she bemoaned her, felt more pain
Than that enduring and strong anguish bred,
Through which the suffering youth was well-nigh dead.

LXXVIII.

" So be thou pleased, my heart," (Zerbino cried,)
" To love me yet, when I am dead and gone,
" As to abandon thee without a guide,
" And not to die, distresses me alone.
" For did it me in place secure betide
" To end my days, this earthly journey done,
" I cheerful, and content, and fully blest
" Would die, since I should die upon thy breast.

LXXIX.

" But since to abandon thee, to whom a prize
" I know not, my sad fate compels, I swear,
" My Isabella, by that mouth, those eyes,
" By what enchained me first, that lovely hair:
" My spirit, troubled and despairing, flies
" Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom; where
" To think, thou wert abandoned so by me,
" Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be."

Ella non sà se non in van dolersi,
Chiamar fortuna e 'l cielo empio e crudele.
Perche, ahi lassa! dicea, non mi sommersi
Quando levai ne l'Ocean le vele?
Zerbin, che i languidi occhi ha in lei conversi,
Sente più doglia ch' ella si querele,
Che de la passion tenace e forte
Che l'ha condotto omai vicino a morte.

Cosi, cor mio, vogliate (le diceva)
Dapoi ch' io sarò morto, amarmi ancora,
Como solo il lasciarvi è che m'aggreva,
Quì senza guida, et non già perch' io mora;
Che se in secura parte m'accadeva
Finir de la mia vita l' ultima ora,
Lieto e contento e fortunato a pieno
Morto sarei, poi ch' io vi moro in seno.

. . . . . .

LXXX.

At this the sorrowing Isabel, declining
Her mournful face, which with her tears o'erflows,
Towards the sufferer, and her mouth conjoining
To her Zerbino's, languid as a rose;
Rose gathered out of season, and which, pining
Fades where it on the shadowy hedgerow grows,
Exclaims, "Without me think not so, my heart,
"On this your last, long, journey to depart.

LXXXI.

"Of this, my heart, conceive not any fear,
"For I will follow thee to heaven or hell;
"It fits our souls together quit this sphere,
"Together go, for aye together dwell.
"No sooner closed thine eyelids shall appear
"Than either me internal grief will quell,
"Or, has it not such power, I here protest,
"I with this sword to-day will pierce my breast.

LXXXII.

"I of our bodies cherish hope not light,
"That they shall have a happier fate when dead:
"Together to entomb them, may some wight,
"Haply by pity moved, be hither led."
She the poor remnants of his vital sprite
Went on collecting, as these words she said:
And while yet aught remains, with mournful lips,
The last faint breath of life devoutly sips.

LXXXIII.

'Twas here his feeble voice Zerbino manned,
Crying, "My deity, I beg and pray,
"By that love witnessed, when thy father's land
"Thou quittedst for my sake; and, if I may

A questo la mestissima Isabella
Declinando la faccia lacrimosa,
E congiungendo la sua bocca a quella
Di Zerbin, languidetta come rosa,
Rosa non colta in sua stagion, si ch' ella
Impallidisca in sù la siepe ombrosa,
Disse, non vi pensate già, mia vita,
Far senza me quest' ultima partita.

. . . . . .

Zerbin, la debil voce rinforzando,
Disse: io vi prego e supplico, mia diva,
Per quello amor che mi mostraste, quando
Per me lasciaste la paterna riva;

" In any thing command thee, I command,
" That, with God's pleasure, thou live-out thy day :
" Nor ever banish from thy memory,
" That, well as man can love, have I loved thee.

LXXXIV.

" God haply will provide thee with good aid,
" To free thee from each churlish deed I fear ;
" As, when in the dark cavern thou wast stayed,
" He sent, to rescue thee, Anglante's peer ;
" So he, (grammercy !) succoured thee dismaid
" At sea, and from the wicked Biscayneer.
" And, if thou must choose death, in place of worse,
" Then only choose it, as a lesser curse."

LXXXV.

I think not these last words of Scotland's knight
Were so exprest, that he was understood :
With these, he finished, like a feeble light,
Which needs supply of wax, or other food.
—Who is there, that has power to tell aright
The gentle Isabella's doleful mood ?
When stiff, her loved Zerbino, with pale face,
And cold as ice, remained in her embrace.

The death of Isabel herself is related in the twenty-first canto, in a manner infinitely touching. But Ariosto, less than any author, requires illustration by fragments or translations, since he is so generally known ; and those who have not yet read him, cannot possibly, from the translation of a few stanzas, form any idea of the grace which pervades the whole poem, where the style, the enchanting language, and the nature of the ornaments, are in perfect harmony with the subject.

The glory of Ariosto is attached to his Orlando Furioso ; but this is not his only work which remains to us. He wrote five comedies, of five acts each, and in verse, which are not now performed, and are scarcely read, since they no longer

E se comandar posso, io vel comando,
Che fin che piace a Dio restiate viva :
Ne mai per caso poniate in oblio
Che quanto amar si può v' abbia amato io.
. . . . . .
Non credo che quest' ultime parole
Potesse esprimer sì che fosse inteso ;
E finì come il debil lume suole
Cui cera manchi od altro in che sia acceso.
Canto 24. *st.* 76, *&c.*

accord with the manners of the present day. Of these five, the two first were originally written in prose, in his early youth. Ariosto proposed to himself Plautus and Terence, as models; and as they had copied the Greek drama, so he imitated the Latin. We find, in his pieces, all the characters of the Roman comedy: the slaves, the parasites, nurses, and female adventurers. The scene of the first, *La Cassaria*, is laid at Mitylene, in an island of Greece, where the poet might suppose the manners to be such as would harmonize with his fable. But the second, *I Suppositi*, is laid at Ferrara; and the plot is artfully connected with the taking of Otranto by the Turks, on the twenty-first of August, 1480; which gives a date to the action, and a locality to the scene. Nor can we avoid remarking the singular contrast between ancient manners and a modern subject. Still, the plot of the comedy is novel and engaging; and there is an interest and even a sensibility in the part of the father. There is, too, sometimes, a gaiety, though rather forced than natural. The wit is rather Italian than Roman. The pleasantries of the slaves and parasites of Ariosto recall to mind too strongly the same personages in Plautus and Terence, and erudition often usurps the place of humour. The scene, after the manner of the Latin comedies, is laid in the street before the house of the principal personage. It never varies; and the unity of time is as rigorously observed as that of place; but, as on the Roman stage, the action is more related than seen. The author seems afraid of placing before the eyes of the spectators, situations of passion, and the language of the heart. In one piece, in which love and paternal affection are the two leading subjects, there is not a single scene between the lover and his mistress, nor between the father and the son; and the incident that produces the catastrophe, passes in the interior of the house, at a distance from the eyes of the audience. Every thing in these pieces reminds us of the Roman theatre. They are ingeniously, though coldly, wrought. Every thing is imitated, even to the bad taste of the pleasantries, which are not sallies of wit, as with our modern harlequins, but coarse classical jokes. We may observe, in the comedies of Ariosto, a powerful talent, corrupted by servile imitation; and in perusing them, we perceive the reason why the Italians, relying always on the ancient models, and never con-

sulting their native genius, were so late in excelling in the dramatic art. *La Calandra*, of Bernardo Dovizio, afterwards Cardinal Bibbiena, who disputes with Ariosto the merit of introducing Italian comedy, has all the same defects, and the same classical imitation, with more vulgarity and less wit. The subject is that of the *Menechmi*, so often produced on the theatres; but, in *La Calandra*, the twins, who are confounded with one another, are a brother and sister.

Ariosto was the first to perceive, that the Italian language did not possess a versification adapted for comedy. Like Dovizio, he wrote his two first pieces in prose; and, at the end of twenty years, turned them into *versi sdruccioli*, for the theatre at Ferrara.

The *versi sdruccioli* are formed of twelve syllables. The accent is laid on the antepenultimate, and the two last are not accented. But these pretended verses are not rhymed, and so many breaks are permitted, that a word is often divided, as in the word *continua-mente*, so that the four first syllables terminate the first verse, whilst the two following commence the second verse. They are, in short, devoid of all harmony and poetic charm, and their monotony renders the reading of these comedies tedious.

Ariosto composed many sonnets, madrigals, and canzoni. They possess less harmony than the poetry of Petrarch, but more nature. His elegies, entitled *Capitoli Amorosi*, in *terza rima*, will bear comparison with the most touching passages in Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius. Love, however, appears there under the romantic form; and Ariosto, though a rival of the ancients, is not, here, their imitator. He more frequently celebrates the joys than the pains of love. What we gather from his own poems, respecting himself, does not represent him as a melancholy or a sentimental man. Lastly, he composed several satires, which serve to elucidate his character, and the various events of his life. These are, strictly speaking, epistles, in verse, addressed to his friends, and which did not appear until after his death. We do not find in these, either the vigour or the asperity of the Roman satire. On the contrary, we remain persuaded, in reading them, that Ariosto was an amiable man, impatient only of the misfortunes which he suffered, of the errors of those who surrounded him, and, above all, of the prosaic spirit of the Cardinal d'Este, who

was incapable of appreciating his merits. We perceive that he was much occupied with himself; and that his health, his comfort, and his diet, held more place in his thoughts than we might have expected in one who sang of knights-errant; who assigns to his heroes a couch in the forest, without any other covering than the heavens, or any other food than the roots of the earth; and who, in the long adventures, through which he leads them, seems to forget that they are subject to all the natural wants of life.*

* I cannot, I think, close a chapter, devoted to Ariosto, in a more appropriate manner, than by exhibiting him as characterized by the first of our living poets, M. Delille, who thus describes him in his poem *Sur l'Imagination.*

L'Arioste naquit; autour de son berceau,
Tous ces légers esprits, sujets brillans des fées,
Sur un char de saphirs, des plumes pour trophées,
Leurs cercles, leurs anneaux et leur baguette en main,
Au son de la guitare, au bruit du tambourin,
Accoururent en foule, et fêtant sa naissance,
De combats et d'amour bercèrent son enfance.
Un prisme pour hochet, sous mille aspects divers,
Et sous mille couleurs, lui montra l'Univers.
Raison, gaité, folie, en lui tout est extrême;
Il se rit de son art, du lecteur, de lui-même,
Fait naître un sentiment qu'il étouffe soudain;
D'un récit commencé rompt le fil dans ma main,
Le renoue aussitôt, part, s'élève, s'abaisse.
Ainsi, d'un vol agile essayant la souplesse,
Cent fois l'oiseau volage interrompt son essor,
S'élève, redescend, et se relève encor,
S'abat sur une fleur, se pose sur un chêne;
L'heureux lecteur se livre au charme qui l'entraine;
Ce n'est plus qu'un enfant qui se plaît aux récits
De géans, de combats, de fantômes, d'esprits,
Qui, dans le même instant, désire, espère, tremble,
S'irrite ou s'attendrit, pleure et rit tout ensemble.

NOTE.

We cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of giving the whole of the very picturesque and animated description, alluded to in page 319, of the preceding chapter, in addition to the stanzas cited by M. Sismondi; availing ourselves of an excellent translation, to be met with in the Rev. W. Parr Greswell's *Memoirs of Politiano;* a work abounding in classic elegance and research, not unworthy of the great scholars whom

it commemorates. In many of his translations, the author has very happily caught the easy and polished style peculiar to Politiano, and to a very few other poets of the Medicean age. This beautiful episode opens with the following line:

"Ma fatto amor la sua bella vendetta," &c.

Now, in his proud revenge exulting high,
Through fields of air, Love speeds his rapid flight,
And in his mother's realms, the treacherous boy
Rejoins his kindred band of flutterers light;
That realm, of each bewitching grace the joy,
Where Beauty wreaths with sweets her tresses bright,
Where Zephyr importunes, on wanton wing,
Flora's coy charms, and aids her flowers to spring.

Thine, Erato! to Love's a kindred name!
Of Love's domains instruct the bard to tell;
To thee, chaste Muse! alone 'tis given to claim
Free ingress there, secure from every spell:
Thou rul'st of soft amours the vocal frame,
And Cupid, oft, as childish thoughts impel
To thrill with wanton touch its golden strings,
Behind his winged back his quiver flings.

A mount o'erlooks the charming Cyprian Isle,
Whence, towards the morn's first blush, the eye sublime
Might reach the sevenfold course of mighty Nile;
But ne'er may mortal foot that prospect climb;
A verdant hill o'erhangs its highest pile,
Whose base, a plain, that laughs in vernal prime;
Where gentlest airs, midst flowers and herbage gay,
Urge o'er the quivering blade their wanton way.

A wall of gold secures the utmost bound,
And, dark with viewless shade, a woody vale;
There, on each branch, with youthful foliage crown'd,
Some feather'd songster chaunts his amorous tale;
And join'd, in murmurs soft, with grateful sound,
Two rivulets glide pellucid through the dale;
Beside whose streams, this sweet, that bitter found,
His shafts of gold, Love tempers for the wound.

No flow'rets here decline their wither'd heads,
Blanch'd with cold snows, or fringed with hoar-frost sere
No Winter, wide, his icy mantle spreads;
No tender scion rends the tempest drear.
Here Spring eternal smiles; nor varying leads
His change quadruple, the revolving year:
Spring with a thousand blooms her brows entwined,
Her auburn locks light fluttering in the wind.

The inferior band of Loves, a childish throng,
Tyrants of none, save hearts of vulgar kind,
Each other gibing with loquacious tongue,
On stridulous stones their barbed arrows grind;

Whilst Pranks and Wiles, the rivulet's marge along,
Ply at the whirling wheel, their task assign'd;
And on the sparkling stone, in copious dews,
Vain Hopes and vain Desires the lymph effuse.

There pleasing Pain and fluttering fond Delight,
Sweet broils, caresses sweet, together go;
Sorrows that hang their heads in doleful plight,
And swell with tears the bitter streamlet's flow;
Paleness all wan, and dreaming still of slight,
Affection fond, with Leanness, Fear, and Woe:
Suspicion, casting round his peering eye,
And o'er the midway, dancing wanton Joy.

Pleasure with Beauty gambols; light in air,
Bliss soars inconstant; Anguish sullen sits;
Blind Error flutters, bat-like, here and there;
And Frenzy raves, and strikes his thigh by fits;
Repentance, of past folly late aware,
Her fruitless penance there ne'er intermits;
Her hand with gore fell Cruelty distains,
And seeks Despair in death to end his pains.

Gestures and nods, that inmost thoughts impart,
Illusions silent, smiles that guile intend,
The glance, the look, that speak th' impassioned heart
Mid flow'ry haunts, for youth their toils suspend:
And never from his griefs Complaint apart,
Prone on his palm his face is seen to bend;
Now hence—now thence—in unrestrained guise,
Licentiousness on wing capricious flies.

Such ministers thy progeny attend,
Venus! fair mother of each fluttering power:
A thousand odours from those fields ascend,
While Zephyr brings in dews the pearly shower
Fann'd by his flight, what time their incense blend
The lily, violet, rose, or other flower;
And views, with conscious pride, the exulting scene,
Its mingled azure, vermil, pale and green.

The trembling pansy virgin fears alarm;
Downward, her modest eye she blushing bends:
The laughing rose, more specious, bold, and warm,
Her ardent bosom ne'er from Sol defends:
Here, from the capsule bursts each opening charm,
Full-blown, th' invited hand she here attends;
Here she, who late with fires delightful glow'd,
Droops languid, with her hues the mead bestrew'd.

In showers descending, courts th' enamoured air
The violet's yellow, purple, snowy hues;
Hyacinth! thy woes, thy bosom's marks declare;
His form Narcissus in the stream yet views;

In snowy vest, but fringed with purple glare,
Pale Clylia still the parting sun pursues;
Fresh o'er Adonis, Venus pours her woes;
Acanthus smiles; her lovers Crocus shows.

To these, we shall beg leave to add a translation of a little irregular piece, entitled "Le Montanine," very pleasingly rendered, by the same pen, from the Italian of Politiano:

Vaghe le Montanine e pastorelle,
Donde venite si leggiadre e belle?

Maids of these hills, so fair and gay,
Say whence you come, and whither stray?

From yonder heights: our lowly shed,
Those clumps that rise so green, disclose;
There, by our simple parents bred,
We share their blessing and repose;
Now, evening from the flowery close,
Recalls, where late our flocks we fed.

Ah, tell me, in what region grew
Such fruits, transcending all compare?
Methinks, I Love's own offspring view,
Such graces deck your shape and air:
Nor gold, nor diamonds, glitter there,
Mean your attire, but angels you.

Yet well such beauties might repine
'Mid desert hills and vales to bloom;
What scenes, where pride and splendour shine,
Would not your brighter charms become!
But say,—with this your alpine home,
Can ye, content, such bliss resign?

Far happier, we, our fleecy care
Trip lightly after to the mead,
Than, pent in city walls, your fair,
Foot the gay dance in silks array'd:
Nor wish have we, save who should braid
With gayest wreaths her flowing hair.

In the same author's Rape of Europa, we likewise meet with abundance of poetical imagery, of which, we shall content ourselves with subjoining the following, as an example:

Beneath a snow-white bull's majestic guise,
Here Jove, conceal'd by love's transforming power,
Exulting bears his peerless, blooming prize:
With wild affright she views the parting shore;

Her golden locks, the winds that adverse rise
In loose disorder spread her bosom o'er,
Light floats her vest, by the same gales upborne:
One hand the ehine, one grasps the circling horn.

Her naked feet, as of the waves afraid,
With shrinking effort, seem to avoid the main;
Terror and grief in every act—for aid
Her cries invoke the fair attendant train:
They, seated distant on the flow'ry mead,
Frantic, recall their mistress loved, in vain—
Return, Europa; far resounds the cry:
On sails the God, intent on amorous joy.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALAMANNI.—BERNARDO TASSO.—TRISSINO.—TASSO.

Ariosto did not assume to himself the honours of the epic muse. But, without designing to soar beyond the romantic epic, which was invented before his time, he carried it to the highest point of perfection. The glory which he reaped, excited the emulation of the numerous poets who then crowded Italy; and many of them, despising the reputation which they might have derived from the lighter compositions of the lyric muse, from bucolics or didactic poems, were ambitious of distinguishing themselves by a loftier and more enduring flight. Each of the fabulous Paladins of the Court of Charlemagne had his poet, in the sixteenth century; and the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur were all celebrated in turn. Two of these romances, in octave stanzas, the *Girone il cortese* of Luigi Alamanni, and the *Amadis* of Bernardo Tasso, have survived the shipwreck of the rest. The first is a work carefully composed by one of the most learned men of his time, who had a talent for versification, and was not devoid of taste. But we feel sensible that he had too laboriously and coldly studied the requisites for his undertaking; and we may imagine that we see him in his room, intent on his work, and thus musing to himself: "Let us commence with a brilliant invocation, in the manner of Virgil; a bold simile will next be required; a degree of familiarity must follow, to explain our style, and to prove that we are not suitors to the loftier Muse alone. After that, we may allow our imagination to

expatiate: here, an incoherent image, which will shew that we are carried away by our feelings; there, a pastoral scene; for variety suits the poetry of romance." Luigi Alamanni has, indeed, very well executed what he so pedantically proposed to himself; but his *Girone il cortese*, which is deficient neither in harmony of versification, nor in variety of incident, is a tedious production, and cannot, throughout, boast a line of inspiration.

Alamanni was born at Florence, in 1495. His family was attached to the party of the Medici; but, when he saw the sovereign authority of his country usurped by that house, and tyrannically administered by the Cardinal Julian, he separated himself from his early connexions, and, in conjunction with his intimate friend Macchiavelli, entered into a conspiracy against the Medici, in 1522. The conspiracy was detected, and Alamanni had the good fortune to escape. An exile from his country, he wandered through different cities of Lombardy and France, for the space of five years. He was recalled, and invested with magisterial functions, during the short-lived triumph of the republican party; but only to be proscribed afresh three years afterwards, when Florence submitted to Alessandro de' Medici. From that period, he lived in France, attached to the service of Francis I., and was employed by him and by his son Henry II. in a diplomatic career, for which his judgment and acuteness of mind more eminently qualified him, than for the cultivation of poetry. He died in 1556. He has left us a poem on agriculture, in *versi sciolti*, or blank verse, in six books, containing about six thousand verses, entitled *La Coltivazione*. This poem has preserved a considerable reputation, from the great purity and elegance of the style, as well as from the methodical arrangement and the sagacity of its agricultural precepts; but, although he has the art of expressing himself poetically on such a subject, the work is, notwithstanding, tedious. An agriculturist would rather choose a well-written treatise in prose, and a votary of the Muse would prefer a more animating theme.*

* I shall select from *La Coltivazione* a specimen of the versification of Alamanni, rather than from his chivalric poems, which are now almost forgotten. He thus describes the process of engrafting.

Ma che direm de l' ingegnoso inserto,
Che in si gran maraviglia al mondo mostra

Quel

Alamanni was also the author of an epic poem, called *L'Avarchide;* a fanciful travesty of the Iliad of Homer, in romantic verse. The scene is transferred to Bruges, the ancient *Avarcum;* the besiegers are knights of King Arthur; and the events are similar to those of the Iliad, and are related, book by book, in the same order.

Bernardo Tasso, who commenced writing his Amadis about the year 1545, and published it in 1559, forty years after the appearance of the Orlando Furioso, was a gentleman of Bergamo, attached, from the year 1531, to the service of Ferdinando San Severino, prince of Salerno, and established by him at Sorrento, where he remained until the year 1547. At that epoch, San Severino, who had opposed himself to the introduction of the Inquisition into Naples, was driven into revolt, and compelled to embrace the party of France. Bernardo Tasso shared his misfortunes, and lost, through his fidelity, the situation which he had held at Naples. He then attached himself to the court of Urbino, and afterwards to

Quel che val l' arte che a natura segua?
Questo, vedendo una ben nata pianta
D' agresti abitator' talvolta preda,
Gli ancide e spegne, e di dolcezza ornata
Nuova e bella colonia in essa adduce:
Nè si sdegna ella, ma guardando in giro,
Si bella scorge l' adottiva prole,
Che, i veri figli suoi posti in obblio,
Lieta e piena d' amor gli altrui nutrisce.
L' arte e l' ingegno quì mille maniere
Maravigliosamente ha poste in pruova.
Quando è più dolce il ciel, chi prende in alto
Le somme cime più novelle e verdi
Del miglior frutto, e risecando il ramo
D' un altro, per se allor aspro e selvaggio,
Ma giovine e robusto, o 'l tronco istesso,
Adatta in modo le due scorze insieme,
Che l' uno e l' altro umor, che d' essi saglia,
Mischiando le virtù, faccia indivisi
Il sapor e l' odor, le frondi e i pomi.
Chi la gemma svegliendo, a l' altra pianta
Fa simil piaga, e per soave impiastro,
Ben congiuuta ed egual l' inchiude in essa.
Chi de la scorza intera spoglia un ramo
In guisa di pastor ch' al nuovo tempo,
Faccia zampogne a risonar le valli,
E ne riveste un altro in forma tale
Che qual gonna nativa il cinga e copra,

that of Mantua, at which latter city he died, on the fourth of September, 1569. It was during his residence at Sorrento, that his son, the illustrious Tasso, was born, on the eleventh of March, 1544; of whom we shall shortly speak, and whom the Neapolitans claim as their countryman, although his father was of Bergamo.

Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto, had transplanted into Italian poetry, the chivalrous romances of the court of Charlemagne, which we have before placed in the third class. Alamanni had versified those of the first, or of the court of King Arthur. Bernardo Tasso devoted himself to the second, and composed a poem of one hundred cantos, on the Amadis of Gaul, a romance equally claimed by the Spaniards and by the French. This romance is distinguished from others by a loftier enthusiasm of love, by richer imagination, and by a greater exaltation of all the chivalrous virtues; although it is somewhat less engaging, and exhibits less of the marvellous in valour and exploits. It is from the expression of the warmer feelings of the South, rather than from historic proof, that we can confirm the claims of the Spaniards to the first invention of the Amadis; and it was probable, therefore, that it would appear to more advantage in a language of the South, than in the romances of the French. The first loves of the Damoisel de la Mer, yet a stranger to his origin, and of the tender and timid Oriana; the constant favour of the good fairy Urganda, extended to all distressed lovers; and the noble qualities of Amadis, who, without knowing Perion, king of the Gauls, delivers him from a thousand dangers, and appears on all occasions, in forests and in castles, as the redresser of wrongs, and the avenger of injuries, might furnish for a poem, a subject full of charm, interest, and action. In such a poem, imagination should have less sway than sensibility; and the poet should not permit himself to trifle with the interest of the narrative, which ought to exercise dominion over the heart. But Bernardo Tasso was far from possessing, in the same degree as his son, or even as the original author whose narrative he translated, a meditative and poetic character. He does not, it is true, like Ariosto, sport with his subject and his readers. He is grave and serious; nor is any sally of wit or pleasantry permitted in his recital. But we are displeased to find that, like Ariosto, he

interrupts his narrative a hundred times, and abandons his heroes at the most critical moment, whenever he has excited our interest in their favour. We feel, in reading him, that he has prescribed these interruptions to himself, in the way of art. They occur more frequently than in Ariosto; and in this manner he entirely destroys the interest which could alone give success to his work. The style is agreeable, but not engaging, and in general more ornamented than poetic. The author, at regular distances, has placed similes and metaphors, or other figures of speech, with which we are sure to meet again, after a certain number of verses, and which appear at stated intervals, as boundaries to mark his poetic route. The dramatic part is neglected, and the speeches have not the native charm of the original Amadis. All these faults render so long a work fatiguing to the reader; and Bernardo Tasso would probably have been forgotten, if the fame of his son had not preserved his memory.*

If we find a spirit of pedantry introducing itself into the

* One of the most brilliant specimens of the poetry of Bernardo Tasso is, perhaps, the description given by the fairy Urganda to Oriana, of the birth and early adventures of her Amadis. *Canto* vi. *Stanza* 33, &c. She relates how Perion, King of the Gauls, wandering unknown, far from his kingdom, to render himself famous for bravery and virtue, won the love of the King of Brittany's daughter; how, being compelled to pursue his adventure, he left her when about to become a mother; and how this princess, with the aid of her friend Darioletta, fearful of detection, exposed her offspring to the waves, in a little bark floating on the river near the palace; and how, finally, the Naiads received him.

Uscir le Dive, e dal liquido regno
Uscendo a gara, di rose e di fiori
Spogliando i prati lor, cinsero il legno,
Come si suol le chiome a vincitori.
Mostrar le sponde d' allegrezza segno,
E i vaghi augei, con garruli rumori,
Faccan, battendo l' ali, compagnia
Al fanciul che felice se ne gia.

Non fur si tosto al mar, ch' alto e sonante
Prima era, che tornò piano e quieto,
Come ora che Nettuno trionfante
Va per lo regno suo tranquillo e lieto;
Corsero tutti i Dei, corsero quante
Ninfe quel fondo avea cupo e segreto;
E presa la casetta, accommiataro
I Dei del fiume che l' accompagnaro.

Non

poetry of Romance, we may naturally suppose, that those poets, who formed themselves on the classic model, would be equally pedantic. Giovanni Giorgio Trissino, born at Vicenza, on the eighth of July, 1478, was ambitious of giving to his country an epic poem, where no other imitation should be perceptible than such as was derived from an ardent study of the ancients. He devoted twenty years to this work, which he began to publish in the year 1547. He chose for his subject, the deliverance of Italy from the Goths, and Belisarius for his hero. It was impossible to have entered on so great a task, with a higher reputation than Trissino possessed. His extensive knowledge, and his poetic genius, were respected by pontiffs and by princes. The subject was noble, and of national interest; the names already illustrious and popular; and the choice which he had made of blank verse, afforded him more freedom of thought, and an indulgence in a more elevated style. But these circumstances served only to render his failure more remarkable. The *versi sciolti* are admirably adapted to tragedy, where the language differs only from prose in being more dignified and more harmonious; but they are far removed from the ease and majesty of the Latin hexameter, and become tedious and prosaic in a narrative, already, in its subject, too closely approximating to history. Trissino had not the art of elevating himself by dignity of expression, or by harmony of language, and, still less, by the majesty of the subject; for, by an ill-conceived imitation of the ancients, he brings before his readers the most trite and trivial circumstances. Homer, indeed, follows his heroes through all the details of life. But these details possess always, in their simplicity, a dignity peculiar to the heroic age; whilst the court of Byzantium presents only the contrast of the insignificance of the men, and the solemnity of the ceremonials. Trissino describes to us the toilet of Justinian. He relates how the

> Non fù alcuna di lor che non porgesse
> L'umida mano a sostenere il legno;
> Non fù alcuna di lor che nol cingesse
> Delle ricchezze del suo salso regno;
> Non fù alcuna di lor che non avesse
> Gioia e pietà del fanciulletto degno;
> Cosi per l' onda allor placida e pura
> Lo conducea con ogni studio e cura.

emperor puts on a succession of pompous robes, with which the monarchs of the East are loaded; but, in overwhelming us with a torrent of words, he does not even succeed in this idle description of ceremony. He never forgets the hour of repast; and his heroes deliberate, with solemn dulness, whether they should resume their duties before or after dinner. Notwithstanding all this labour, he does not even describe the military feasts, or the manners of the age, with any degree of interest.* In the second book, he details, with fatiguing erudition, in the first place, the geography and statistics of the empire, and, afterwards, the formation of the legions. But all is in the style of a gazette, without relieving the multitude of verses by the least interest or poetry, and without even affording instruction in the room of pleasure. We constantly perceive, that, amidst all his display of knowledge, he confounds both time and manners. In his mythology, fantastically composed of paganism and christi

* Cosi quei ch' eran stati entr' al consiglio
Rinchiusi alquanto, lieti se n' andaro
A prender cibo ne i diletti alberghi.
L' ordinator delle città del mondo
Come fù dentro all' onorata stanza,
Spogliossi il ricco manto, e chiamar fece
Il buon Narsete, e l'buon conte d'Isaura;
E disse ad ambi lor queste parole:
Cari e prudenti miei mastri di guerra,
Non vi sia grave andare insieme al campo,
Ed ordinar le genti in quella piaggia
Grande che va della marina al vallo:
Che dopo pranzo vo' venirvi anch' io
Per dar principio alla futura impresa.
Udito questo i dui baroni cletti
Si dipartiro, e scesi entr' al cortile,
Disse Narsete al buon conte d'Isaura:
Che vogliam fare, il mio onorato padre?
Volemo andare al nostro alloggiamento
A prender cibo, e poi dopo 'l mangiare
Girsene al campo ad ordinar le schiere?
A cui rispose il vecchio Paulo e disse:
O buon figliuol del generoso Araspol
Il tempo ch' insta è si fugace e corto
Ch' a noi non ci bisogna perdern' oncia:
Andiamo al campo, che sarem sul fatto;
E quivi eseguirem questi negozi,
E poscia ciberensi, benche è megl
Senza cibo restar che senza onore

anity, in which he invokes Apollo and the Muses to interest themselves in the triumph of the faith, we find the attributes of the Deity in conversation with each other. The poverty of his style, which his gravity makes still more repulsive, the bad taste in which his characters discourse, and the extreme tediousness of the principal action, render this work, so long anxiously expected, so celebrated before its birth, and so distinguished by name even at the present day, one of the worst poems that has ever appeared in any language.

But, whilst men of the first reputation in Italy failed in the gigantic enterprise of producing an epic poem, a young man, of twenty-one years of age, scarcely known by a romantic poem called *Rinaldo*, commenced writing, at the court of Ferrara, whither he had been lately invited, that *Jerusalem delivered*, which has placed its author by the side of Homer and of Virgil, and has elevated him, perhaps, above all modern poets. Torquato Tasso, whose misfortunes equalled his glory, devoted sixteen years to the composition of this poem, of which seven editions appeared in the same year, 1581, almost all without the concurrence of the author.

The merit of Tasso consists in having chosen the most engaging subject that could have inspired a modern poet. History presents us with the remarkable fact of a mighty contest between the people who were destined to exalt the human race to its highest pitch of civilization, and those who would have reduced it to the most degrading barbarism. This was the struggle between the Christians and Saracens, during the wars of the crusades. It is not to be denied that, at the time the Latins first commenced these wars, the Saracens were greatly superior in letters, in arts, and in manners, to the Christians who attacked them. But they had already passed the meridian of their glory ; and the defects of their religion and their government, and the barbarism of the Turks, were rapidly drawing them to the degrading state, in which we behold them at the present day. At the same time, the crusaders, in spite of their ferocity, ignorance, and superstition, possessed the germs of civilization. Their force of thought and sentiment was about to develope that improvement which began with the Latins in the eleventh century, and which has rendered Europe so far superior to the rest of

the world. If the crusaders had succeeded in their sanguinary contest with the people of the East, Asia would have received our laws, our manners, and our customs; and would have been at this day a flourishing country, inhabited by a free and noble race. The arts, for which she is formed by nature, would there have attained that perfection which was known to the Greeks, and which was found in the brilliant and favoured cities of Seleucia and Antioch. The borders of the Jordan would now have been cultivated by a happy people; and the lofty walls of Jerusalem would not have stood isolated, in the midst of desert sands and rocks barren of verdure. The fruitful plains of Syria, and the delicious valleys of Lebanon, would have been the abode of peace and enjoyment, or the theatre of the most brilliant actions. The overbearing Turk, the ferocious Druse, or the savage Bedouin, would not have oppressed the wretched descendants of the most ancient people of the earth. If the Mahomedans, on the contrary, had accomplished their projects of conquest; if the invasion of Europe, commenced at the same time in the East, in the West, and in the South, had succeeded, the energies of the human mind would have been extinguished by despotism, and none of the qualities, which characterize the European, would have developed themselves. He would have been cowardly, ignorant, and perfidious, like the Greek, the Syrian, and the Fellah of Egypt; and his country, less favoured by nature, would have been buried amidst dark forests, or inundated by marshy waters, like the deserted districts of Romagna. The contest was terminated, without victory declaring for either power. The Mahomedans and the Franks still exist, the subjects of mutual comparison; and the latter may acknowledge, after the lapse of seven centuries, their debt of gratitude to the valour of their ruder ancestors.

These two races of men, when they combated, seven centuries ago, could not foresee the important consequences which Providence attached to their efforts. But a motive, not less noble, not less disinterested, and still more poetical, directed their arms. A religious faith connected their salvation with their valour. The Saracens considered themselves called on to subjugate the earth to the faith of Mahomet; the Christians, to enfranchise the sacred spot

where their divine founder suffered death and the mysteries of redemption were accomplished. We are not bound theologically to inquire whether the crusades were conformable to the spirit of Christianity. Were a Council of Clermont held in the present day, the voice of the combatants would not invocate God alone, but, honour, their country, and humanity. But the religion of that age was wholly warlike; and it was a profound, disinterested, and enthusiastic sentiment which led our ancestors to bid adieu to their wives and children, to traverse unknown seas, and to brave a thousand deaths in a foreign land. This sentiment was highly poetical. Self-devotion and confidence in heaven, form heroes; and accordingly we never, at any period, beheld so brilliant a display of valour. Superstition arose out of the very circumstances of the times. Those who wholly devoted themselves to the service of God, might expect that God would interfere in their favour, and on this interference they reposed.—

"Eh! quel temps fut jamais plus fertile en miracles?"

The whole history of the crusades, indeed, abounds with miracles. The assistance of God was invoked before battle, his arm was visible in their deliverance, his rod chastised them in defeat; and marvels were so very prevalent, that the supernatural seemed to usurp the laws of nature and the common course of events. The Mahomedans, on their side, relied also on Divine protection. They invoked, in their mosques, with no less confidence, the great defender of their faith; and they attributed to his favour, or to his anger, their victories and their disasters. The prodigies which each party boasted to have seen performed in their behalf, were not denied by their enemies; but, as each believed themselves worshippers of the true God, so each attributed to the power of evil spirits the occasional success of their opponents. The faith against which the crusaders fought, appeared to them the worship of the powers of hell. They easily believed that a contest might exist between invisible beings, as between different nations on earth; and, when Tasso armed the dark powers of enchantment against the Christian knights, he only developed and embellished a popular idea, for the adoption of which our education, our prejudices, and all our ancient traditions have prepared us.

The scene of the *Jerusalem delivered*, so rich in recollections, and so brilliant from its associations with all our religious feelings, is one in which nature displays her richest treasures, and where descriptions in their turn the most lovely and the most austere, attract the pen of the poet. The enchanting gardens of Eden, and the sands of the Desert, are approximated. All the animals which man has brought under his dominion, and all those that wage war against him ; all the plants which adorn his domains, and all that are found in the wilderness, belong to the varied soil of Asia, to that poetical land, where every object seems created to form a picture. On the other hand, the nations of Christendom send forth their warriors to the army of the Cross. The whole world is here the patrimony of the poet. He even calls on the remote Iceland, separated from the rest of the world, *La divisa dal mondo ultima Islanda:* on Norway, who sends her King Gernando, and on Greece, who furnishes only two hundred knights, for a war in which her own existence is at stake. At the same time, all the people of Asia and Africa, united by a common cause, contribute to the defence of Jerusalem, forces differing in manners, in dress, and in language. We may confidently assert, that however high an interest the taking of Troy might possess for the Greeks, the first result of their combined efforts, and the first victory which they had gained over the people of Asia ; and whatever interest the vanity of the Romans had attached to the adventures of Æneas, whom their poetic fables led the Romans to adopt as their progenitor ; neither the Iliad nor the Æneid possess the dignity of subject, the interest, at the same time, divine and human, and the varied and dramatic action, which are peculiar to the *Jerusalem delivered.*

On the first opening of the poem of Tasso, we are struck with the magnificence of the subject. He lays it all before our eyes in the first stanza :

> Th' illustrious Chief who warred for Heaven, I sing,
> And drove from Jesus' tomb th' insulting King.
> Great were the deeds his arms, his wisdom wrought ·
> With many a toil the glorious prize he bought :
> In vain did hell in hateful league combine
> With rebel man, to thwart the great design ;
> In vain the harnessed youth from Afric's coasts,
> Join'd their proud arms with Asia's warlike hosts ;

Heav'n smiled; and bade the wand'ring bands obey
The sacred ensigns of his lofty sway.*

The whole course of the poem is truly epic. It is entire, simple, and grand; and ends, as it commenced, with dignity. Tasso does not undertake the whole history of the first crusade, but enters on his action when the war had already begun. His whole poem is comprised in the campaign of 1099, and in a space of time which, according to history, consists of no more than forty days. This was the fifth year after the preaching of the crusades, which began in 1095, and the third after the Latins passed into Asia, which happened in the month of May, 1097. In that year, they had taken Nicea, and commenced the siege of Antioch. That city, which had resisted their arms for nine months, surrendered only in July, 1098. The Christians, exhausted by their struggles against the countless armies of their enemies, by a long famine, followed by a pestilence, and discouraged and enfeebled still more by dissensions, had retired into their cantonments. But in the spring of the following year, they assembled afresh in the plains of Tortosa. They commenced their march to Jerusalem, and arriving before that city, at the beginning of July, took it after a siege of eight days, on the fifteenth of July, 1099. They defended it against the Sultan of Egypt, whom they defeated at Ascalon, on the fourteenth of August following, and thus founded the kingdom of Jerusalem, where Godfrey of Boulogne ruled only for a year.

The poem of Tasso opens in the plain of Tortosa. The Deity himself calls the crusaders to arms. One of his angels appears to the pious Godfrey of Boulogne, reproaches the Christians with supineness, promises him victory, and announces to him the decrees of God, who has elected him leader of the sacred host. Godfrey instantly assembles his companions in arms. By his eloquence, he imparts to them the divine enthusiasm which animates his own breast, and a sudden inspiration determines the other warriors to choose him for their leader. He orders the army to prepare to march for Jerusalem, and is desirous of seeing it re-united on the field. This review, which acquaints us with the most important

* [The extracts are taken from Mr. Hunt's spirited translation —*Tr.*]

persons of the poem, is a homage rendered to all the nations of the West, who flocked to this great enterprise, and a poetical monument raised to the fame of those heroes, whose glory is still reflected on their latest descendants. Tasso seizes the opportunity of exhibiting, in the Christian army, the ancestors of the princes whose protection he had experienced; but, above all, Guelfo IV. Duke of Bavaria, son of the Marquis d'Este, Alberto Azzo II., who died in Cyprus, on his return from the Holy Land, and Rinaldo, an imaginary hero, from whom Tasso has derived the family of Este, Dukes of Ferrara and Modena, in whose court he lived. We also meet with the generous Tancred, cousin of the celebrated Robert Guiscard, who had just achieved the conquest of the Two Sicilies; Raymond de Saint Gilles, Count of Toulouse, the Nestor of the army; and a crowd of chiefs, whom the poet has invested with great interest of character.

On the other side, the Emir, lieutenant of the Sultan of Egypt, whom Tasso has named Aladin, King of Jerusalem, prepares himself for defence. He is aided by the sorcerer Ismeno, who in order to frustrate the attack of the Christians, wished to employ, in his profane art, a miraculous image of the Virgin, which was preserved in the temple. This image disappeared in the night. A priest of the temple, or, perhaps, a celestial power, had saved it from profanation. Sophronia, a young Christian of Jerusalem, accuses herself of having stolen the image from the Saracens, in order to divert the anger of the king from her people. The love of Olindo for Sophronia, who wishes, in his turn, to sacrifice himself for her; the cruelty of Aladin, who condemns them both to death; and the generosity of Clorinda, who saves them from the stake, form one of the most touching episodes of the *Jerusalem delivered.* This episode was translated by J. J. Rousseau, and is, from that circumstance, better known to the French nation, than any other parts of the poem. This is a happy mode of introducing Clorinda, the heroine of the infidel army, to the reader. Her generosity is, thus, with great judgment, made known to us before her valour; otherwise, this fierce Amazon, whom we always find in the midst of blood and combats, might have revolted our feelings. Tasso, in his character of Clorinda, has imitated Ariosto. He has borrowed from his Bradamante or his Marfisa; but heroines

assimilate better with the chivalrous romance than with the epic, where probability is a more necessary quality. This character is, in fact, misplaced, in describing the manners of the East, where a woman was never known to appear in arms or in the field. We more than once feel in reading Tasso, that he has drawn his ideas of chivalry too frequently from Ariosto, and from the celebrated romances of his time. Hence arises, sometimes, a mixture of the two styles. Tasso ought not to have attempted to rival Ariosto, in the indulgence of a brilliant and romantic fancy, since his success here would have been a fault. But, however improbable his Clorinda appears, it is in her character that his greatest beauties are displayed. In the same canto, Argante, the bravest of the infidel heroes, appears also for the first time. He is sent on an embassy to the Christian camp, and he there manifests the fierce, impetuous, and ungovernable character which he is destined to support throughout the poem.

At the opening of the third canto, as soon as morning dawns on the warriors, they commence their march with ardour, in the hopes of reaching the end of their pilgrimage.

The eager bands, unconscious of their speed,
With winged feet, and winged hearts, proceed.
But when the Sun, now high advancing, hurl'd
His noon-tide flood of radiance o'er the world,
Lo ! on their sight Jerusalem arose !
The sacred towers each pointing finger shows ;
Jerusalem was heard from ev'ry tongue,
Jerusalem a thousand voices rung.
Thus, some bold mariners, a hardy band,
Whose venturous search explores a distant land,
And braving dubious seas, and unknown skies,
The faithless winds and treacherous billows tries ;
When first the wished-for shore salutes their eye,
Bursts from their lips at once the joyful cry ;
Each shows the welcome soil, and pleased at last,
Forgets his weary way, and dangers past.*

* Ali ha ciascuno al core, ed ali al piede,
Ne del suo ratto andar però s' accorge,
Ma quando il sol gli aridi campi fiede
Con raggi assai ferventi, e in alto sorge,
Ecco ! apparir Gierusalem si vede
Ecco ! additar Gierusalem si scorge,
Ecco ! da mille voci unitamente
Gierusalemme salutar si sente.

Così

To this first transport of joy, a deep contrition soon succeeds, which is naturally excited in the devout pilgrims, by the sight of a city which their God chose for his residence; where he died, and was buried, and rose from the dead.

With naked feet they pressed the rugged road;
Their glorious Chief the meek example show'd;
All pomp of dress, each vesture's gaudy fold,
With silken drapery gay, or rich with gold,
Quick they strip off, and ev'ry helm divest
Of painted plumage, and of nodding crest;
Alike they quit their heart's proud guise, and pour
Of penitential tears a pious shower.

As soon as Aladin discovers the approach of the Christians, he sends out the flower of his army to prevent their nearer approach to Jerusalem. He himself ascends a tower, which commands an extensive view of the country, to see the armies defile. He is accompanied by Erminia, daughter of the Sultan of Antioch, whose father and whose brother had perished the preceding year by the Christian sword; but who, notwithstanding, knew not how to steel her heart against the bravest and the noblest of the Crusaders. Aladin interrogates her as to the names and the country of the knights whom he observes to distinguish themselves most highly by their valour. Tancred is the first; and in recognizing him, a sigh escapes from the bosom of Erminia, and her eyes are bathed in tears. Tancred himself, insensible to the love of Erminia, which he has not even remarked, is enamoured of Clorinda, with whom he unknowingly combats With a blow of his spear, he strikes off her helmet.

The thongs that braced her helm, asunder flew;
With naked head, she stood exposed to view;
Loose to the wind her golden tresses stream'd;
And 'mid the storm of war the Sun of beauty beam'd.
Flash'd her bright eyes with anger, stern and wild,
Yet lovely still; how lovely had she smiled!

Così di naviganti audace stuolo
Che mova a ricercar estranio lido;
E in mar dubbioso, e sotto ignoto polo,
Provi l' onde fallaci e 'l vento infido,
S' al fin discopre il disiato suolo,
Lo saluta da lunge in lieto grido:
E l' uno à l' altro 'l mostra, e in tanto obblia
La noia e 'l mal de la passata via.

Canto iii. *st.* 3, 4.

Tancred, thenceforth defends himself no longer against the fair Amazon. Whilst she presses on him with her sword, he urges his suit ; but a crowd of routed Saracens separate them from each other.

From the commencement of the poem, the most tender sentiments are thus combined with the action ; and in the *Jerusalem delivered*, a nobler part has been assigned to love, than has been given to it in any other epic poem. This part is conformable to what is required from the epic romance, which is more elevated in its nature, more religious, and, consequently, more in unison with the softer passion. Love, enthusiastic, respectful, and full of homage, was an essential character of chivalry. It was the source of the noblest actions, and gave inspiration to all the poetry of the age. If Achilles had been represented in the Iliad as enamoured, he could not have forgotten his power, and the woman whom he loved must have submitted to his authority. This prejudice of ancient Greece must have given to his passion a character of barbarism, which instead of exalting, abases, the hero. But Tancred's flame is ennobled by the religion which he professes, and he becomes more amiable, without any sacrifice of his valour. With the heroes of the classical epic, love is a weakness ; with the Christian knights, a devotion. The character of Tasso, who was himself possessed of an enthusiastic imagination, and of a heart open to all romantic impressions, led him to the natural expression of a tender and delicate sentiment.

The powers of darkness could not behold without grief, the approaching triumph of the Christian arms. In the fourth canto of his poem, Tasso introduces us to their councils. Satan, wishing to resist the conquests of the Crusaders, assembles his sable bands.

> Th' infernal trump, that loud and hoarsely bray'd,
> Convened the inmates of th' eternal shade :
> Hell's gloomy caverns shook at every pore ;
> The murky air return'd the sullen roar :
> Not half so loud, from upper regions driven,
> Bursts on th' affrighted world the bolt of Heaven;
> Nor such the shock, when from Earth's womb profound,
> Exploding vapours rive the solid ground.*

* This stanza has been universally admired, as much for the effect of its imitative harmony, as for the beauty of its images.

Chiama

The employment of the infernal spirits in combating the decrees of Heaven, presented many difficulties to Tasso. Superstition, by whose hand they were drawn, had given to them a semblance mean and ridiculous. Although Satan had resisted an all-powerful Being, we do not find him invested with grandeur or majesty. It is difficult to represent him, without exciting distaste or ridicule; and, in spite of the character which some Christian poets have drawn of him, Satan is seldom considered as a dignified being. Tasso has combated this difficulty; and his portrait of the savage ruler of Hell, whom he calls Pluto, inspires terror rather than disgust.

On his fierce brow majestic terror rode,
That swell'd with conscious pride th' infernal God:
His reddening eye, whence streaming poison ran,
Glared like a comet, threatening woe to man.
Thick matted folds his ample beard display'd,
And veil'd his bosom in its mighty shade.
His mouth was like the whirlpool of the flood,
Dark, yawning, deep, and foul with grumous blood.*

Chiama gli abitator dell' ombre eterne
Il rauco suon della Tartarea tromba;
Treman le spaziose atre caverne,
E l' aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba.
Nè sì stridendo mai, dalle superne
Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba,
Nè sì scossa giammai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in sen gravida serra.

Canto iv. *st.* 3.

* Orrida maestà nel fero aspetto
Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende,
Rosseggian gli occhi, e di veneno infetto
Come infausta cometa il guardo splende;
Gl' involve il mento, e sù l' irsuto petto
Hispida e folta la gran barba scende;
E in guisa di voragine profonda
S'apre la bocca, d'atro sangue immonda.
Quali i fumi sulfurei ed infiammati
Escon di Mongibello, e il puzzo, e 'l tuono;
Tal della fiera bocca i negri fiati,
Tale il fetore e le favelle sono.
Mentre ei parlava, Cerbero i latrati
Ripresse, e l' Idra si fè muta al suono:
Restò Cocito, e ne tremar gli abissi,
E in questi detti il gran rimbombo udissi.

Canto iv. *st.* 7, 8

But we soon perceive that this powerful picture is almost revolting to us; and still more so, when we find, in the next stanza, that he appeals to another sense, that of the smell, an allusion to which is not permitted in poetry. The speech which Satan addresses to the infernal spirits, is the prototype of that sombre eloquence assigned to him by Milton. The hatred which fires him, and which permits him, in his fall, to consider only the means of revenge, is sufficiently exalted, to ennoble his character. The demons, obedient to his voice, immediately separate, and take their flight to different regions of the earth, air, and water, to unite against the Christian army all the power which they exercise over the elements, and all which they have acquired over the men who devote themselves to their worship. The sultan of Damascus, the most renowned among the magicians of the East, at the instigation of his evil genius, undertakes to seduce the Christian knights, by the charms of his niece, the sorceress, Armida. The East had conceded to her the palm of beauty. In artifice, address, and the most subtle intrigues of a woman or a sorceress, she was equally skilled. Armida, confident in her charms, repairs alone to the camp of the Christians. She hopes to draw into the snares of love, the most valiant of the foes of her country; and, perhaps, the illustrious Godfrey himself. It is in this portrait of Armida, in the description of all that is lovely, tender, and voluptuous, that Tasso has surpassed himself and is inimitable. The poets of antiquity appear not to have felt so intensely the power of beauty; nor, like Tasso, have they ever expressed the intoxication of love.* Armida, amidst a crowd of knights, desires to be conducted to the pious commander. She throws herself at his feet, and claims his protection; she relates that her uncle had despoiled her of her inheritance; she feigns that he had attempted to poison her; she represents herself as a fugitive and an outlaw; and invests herself with imaginary dangers, in order to excite the sympathy of Godfrey and of the knights who surround him. She concludes by imploring him to grant her a small band of Christian soldiers to reconduct her to Damascus, of which place, her partisans had promised to open to her, one of the gates. Godfrey's constancy is at first shaken; but, after hesitating, he courteously declines diverting the

* *Canto* iv. *st.* 28 to 32.

army from the service of God, for an object of human interest. The knights, whom the tears of Armida had softened, and who are smitten by her beauty, condemn the cold prudence of their chief. Eustace, the brother of Godfrey, and the most ardent admirer of Armida, speaks, in the name of all the others, with that courage and chivalrous frankness, which render the period of the Crusades an epoch, more favourable than any other, for poetry. He reminds them of the obligation of all true knights to protect the feeble and the oppressed, and above all, the weaker sex.

"Heavens! be it ne'er in France's land surmised,
Nor any land where courtesy is prized,
That in so fair a cause aloof we stood,
Shrunk from fatigue, or fear'd to risk our blood.
For me, henceforth I cast with shame aside
My glittering corslet, and my helmet's pride,
For ever I ungird my trusty brand;
No more shall arms be wielded by this hand;
Farewell, my steed, our proud career is o'er;
And thou, fair knighthood, be usurp'd no more."*

Godfrey, moved by the entreaties of his brother, and carried away by the wishes of the whole army, consents, at length, that ten knights shall accompany Armida, to restore her to the throne of her ancestors. The sorceress, after having obtained her suit, attempts to increase the number of her devotees, by seducing, in her return, more than Godfrey had conceded to her; and the intrigues of her art are described with a delicacy and a grace which we should, perhaps, look for in vain in the erotic poets, and, at the same time, with a dignity which renders this picture worthy of the epic muse.

We have now analyzed the first four cantos of the *Jerusalem delivered.* The action is already commenced; the most important personages have been introduced; the resources of the enemy are developed; the designs of the infernal powers

* Ah non sia ver per Dio, che si ridica
In Francia, ò dove in pregio è cortesia,
Che si fugga da noi rischio ò fatica
Per cagion così giusta e così pia;
Io per me quì depongo elmo e lorica,
Quì mi scingo la spada, e più non fia
Ch' adopri indegnamente arme e destriero,
O 'l nome usurpi mai de cavaliero.

Canto iv. *st.* 81

are announced; and we perceive the obstacles to the progress of the Christians. Yet the poet has not paused in his flight in order to acquaint us with preceding events. The action advances; and the occurrences, anterior to the opening of the poem, are recalled incidentally, and as occasion presents itself, without suspending for them the course of the narrative. A long recital sets forth anterior occurrences in the Odyssey, and in the Æneid; but the Iliad, which has evidently served for a model to Tasso, is marked by an uninterrupted progress, like the *Jerusalem delivered*, without reference to past events. Almost all the other epic poets have imitated Virgil, either in order to render the developement more easy, or to give, by a long discourse, a more dramatic form to the narrative. Vasco de Gama, Adam, Telemachus, and Henry IV., have each an important recital assigned to them, which occupies the second and third books of the Lusiad, of Paradise Lost, of the Telemachus, and the Henriade. Several of the Italian critics have made it a cause of serious reproach to Tasso, that he has not conformed to the model of the great masters; but they ought rather to have felt the difference between mere imitation, and the observance of particular rules. These rules prescribe nothing. They interdict only what is contrary to the general effect, to emotion, and to the sentiment of the beautiful. This feeling is checked, and the mind of the reader remains in doubt, if the persons, for whom we wish to interest him, are unknown to him; and if he be unacquainted with the time and the events, into the midst of which we wish to transport him. But the manner of accomplishing this is not governed by the laws of poetry. On the contrary, we ought to feel indebted to the poet, if he effects it in a novel mode, and if, disdaining the example of his predecessors, he does not model his poem, like a work of manufacture, by a common pattern. But, in Tasso, we find no difficulty in comprehending this rule, or in following it. He does not require from his readers an acquaintance with the events preceding those of his poem. He is complete and satisfactory, and supports himself unaided. This merit he owes, in great part, to the extreme care which he took to instruct himself in the truth of the incidents, and to ascertain, in all their details, the true situation of the places where the scene of his poem is laid. When M. de Châteaubriand read this poem, before the walls of Jerusalem, he was

struck with the fidelity of the description, which seems reserved for ocular demonstration. The description of the city of Jerusalem is drawn, he assures us, with the most scrupulous accuracy.* The forest, situated six miles distant from the camp, on the side of Arabia, and in which Ismeno prepares his dark enchantments, still remains. It is the only one found in the neighbourhood of the city, and it was from thence that the Crusaders procured all the materials for their engines of war. We even remark the tower, where Aladin is represented as sitting with Erminia ; and we retrace the paths by which Armida arrived, Erminia fled, and Clorinda advanced to the combat. This scrupulous accuracy gives a new value to the poem of Tasso. It connects, more intimately, history and fiction ; and the first Crusade is inseparably united with the name of the poet who has celebrated it.

In his review of the army of the Crusaders, Tasso has fixed our attention on a band of adventurers, the flower of the Christian chivalry. The chief of this band, Dudone di Consa, had been slain by Argante, in the first action, under the walls of Jerusalem. It was, consequently, requisite to appoint a new leader to this band of knights, the hope of the army. Eustace, who wished to prevent Rinaldo from following Armida, points him out as the most deserving of this distinction, and endeavours to rouse his ambition. Gernando, son of the King of Norway, lays claim to it, and is enraged to find a competitor. He spreads injurious reports against Rinaldo. Rinaldo hears and resents them. The two knights rush on each other, in spite of the crowd of warriors who endeavour to separate them, and Gernando is killed in the combat. The manners and the laws of knighthood required, that an impeachment of a soldier's honour should be avenged by the sword. But, on the other hand, all dissensions amongst the Crusaders ought to have been suspended ; and he who had dedicated his sword to God, ought no longer to have employed it in his own cause. Rinaldo, therefore, in order to avoid a military trial, was compelled to quit the Christian camp. During these occurrences, Armida carries with her, not only the ten knights conceded to her by Godfrey, but many others besides, who, in the first night after her departure, had

Canto III. *st.* 55. 57.

deserted the camp to follow her ; and, whilst the army is enfeebled by the absence of so many warriors, it is thrown into alarm by the loss of its convoys, and by the approach of the Egyptian fleet.

The sixth canto opens with two extraordinary combats, to which the Circassian, Argante, challenges the Christians in presence of the whole army. The one is with Otho, who remains his prisoner ; the other, with Tancred. Night alone interrupts the second combat. The two warriors are alike wounded ; and Erminia, called on to give to Argante those attentions which, in the chivalrous ages, the females bestowed on the wounded, whose only physicians they were, regrets not having sooner succoured the hero whom she loves, to whom she is bound in gratitude, and who stands in need of her healing hand. She resolves, at length, to join him in the Christian camp. United in strict friendship with Clorinda, she avails herself of her intimacy to array herself in her armour, and passes through the city gates in her name. The whole passage, where her delicate form is represented as with difficulty supporting the weight of her armour, is written with an inexpressible charm.

With the rude steel's ungrateful load she prest
Her golden hair, soft neck, and swelling breast ;
Her arm, unequal to a task so great,
Gives way beneath the buckler's massy weight ;
Glittering in burnish'd steel the damsel stood,
Her sex, her nature, and herself subdued.
Love stood delighted by ; the wanton child
Eyed the mask'd Beauty, and in mischief smiled ;
'Twas thus he smiled, when Hercules of yore
Resigned his manhood, and the distaff bore.
Scarce can her limbs the unequal weight sustain
Her feet move slowly, and she steps with pain ;
She leans, confiding, on her faithful maid.
Who walks before, and lends her useful aid :
But from inspiring hope new spirits rise,
And love fresh vigour to her limbs supplies.
She urges on ; the spot they reach with speed
Where waits the Squire ; they mount the ready steed.*

* Col durissimo acciar preme ed offende
Il delicato collo e l' aurea chioma :
E la tenera man lo scudo prende
Pur troppo grave e insopportabil soma :
Così tutta di ferro intorno splende,
E in atto militar se stessa doma ; Gode

As soon as she has escaped from the city, she despatches her knight to inform Tancred, and ask for her, a protection to the Latin camp. During this interval, and to calm her impatience, she advances to a neighbouring height, whence she views the tents so endeared to her.

Still Night, in star-embroider'd vest array'd,
Cast o'er the slumb'ring world her silent shade,
No fleeting cloud disturb'd her tranquil reign;
The moon, slow rising through the azure plain,
O'er lawn and hill her silver lustre threw,
And chang'd to living pearls the orbed dew.
In passion's mazes lost, th' enamour'd Dame
Gave pensive utt'rance to her ill-starr'd flame,
Bade the mute plains her secret sorrows know,
And call'd on silence to attest her woe.
Then gazing on the distant Camp, she cries:
"Ye Latin tents, fair are ye in my eyes!
The passing gales that from ye blow, impart
A transient comfort to my bleeding heart!
So may relenting Heaven reserve for me,
Mild in its wrath, a kinder destiny,
As 'tis in you alone my woes must cease;
As in the midst of arms I look for peace.
Receive me then! and grant me there to prove
The pity, promised by assuring Love;
That soothing pity which I found before,
A captive, from the hero I adore.
Nor one vain wish I cherish, to regain
My kingly honours and my rich domain;
All earthly glories freely I resign;
Far other wish, far other hopes are mine!
Though stripp'd of these, abundant bliss 'twould give
Within your loved abode, a slave to live!"
Ah! little, while she spake, the Fair divined
Th' unkindly lot her frowning fates design'd!
As on the height she stood, with quiv'ring play,
Danced on her polish'd arms the lunar ray;

Gode amor ch' è presente, e tra se ride
Come all 'hor già che avvolse in gonna Alcide.
O con quanta fatica ella sostiene
L' inegual peso, e move lenti i passi,
Ed à la fide compagnia, s' attiene
Che per appoggio andar dinanzi fassi;
Ma rinforzan gli spirti amore e spene,
E ministran vigore ai membri lassi:
Sì che giungono al loco ove la aspetta
Lo scudiero, e in arcion sagliono in fretta.

Canto vi. *st.* 92, 93.

> The steel, the snowy vest that deck'd her frame,
> Wide o'er the fields reflect the silv'ry flame;
> The burnish'd tiger, blazing on her crest,
> Clorinda's self, in pomp of war confest.*

Not far from thence is posted an advanced guard of the Christians, commanded by two brothers, Alcandro and Polypherno. The last, imagining he sees Clorinda, rushes forward, to attack her. The supposed warrior flies; and Tancred, informed that Clorinda has been seen in the camp, flatters himself that the message he has received comes from her, and, wounded as he is, follows in the pursuit, to watch over her safety.

Erminia, after flying the whole day, reaches a solitary valley, watered by the Jordan, which the noise of arms had never reached. She is there received by an aged shepherd, who, with his three sons, tends his flock, in the bosom of peace and innocence. It is impossible to draw a more enchanting and touching picture of pastoral life, than this, in which Erminia resolves to wait for happier days.† Tancred, on his part, misled by the pursuit, arrives at the castle of Armida, where, by treachery, he is made prisoner. He does not appear, on the day appointed, to renew with Argante the combat which night had interrupted; and the flower of the army have forsaken the camp, in the train of Armida. In the mean time, the venerable Raymond, Count of Toulouse, supplies the place of Tancred; and Tasso gives interest to this part of the poem, in confronting an aged soldier with the most renowned and most ferocious of the Saracens, and in giving him the advantage, by means of celestial aid. This single combat is terminated, as in the Iliad, by an arrow despatched from the Asiatic camp against the Christian warrior. In the engagement which follows, the Latins are defeated. The eighth canto represents them in still greater peril. The arms of Rinaldo, stained with blood, are brought to the Christian camp, and many circumstances lead to the belief that he has been assassinated by his comrades. Alecto directs the suspicions against Godfrey himself. The Italians, long jealous of the French, seize their arms to avenge their hero. A dreadful sedition spreads through the camp, and seems to threaten a civil commotion. This scene, as well as

* *Canto* vi. *st.* 104, &c. † *Canto* vii. *st.* 1 to 22.

the dignified calmness of Godfrey, who recalls the revolted troops to their duty, is painted with the hand of a master.

The situation of the Christians now becomes every day more critical. Soliman, Sultan of Nicea, having been driven from his kingdom by the arms of the Christians, at the commencement of the war, had fled to the Sultan of Cairo, and had been commissioned by him to call to arms the Arabs of the desert. He arrives, in the ninth canto, on the night after the tumult. An innumerable host of Bedouins follows him. Under the cover of night, they attack the camp of the Crusaders, and spread dismay and confusion ; whilst Argante and Clorinda make a sortie, and attack the camp on the other side. The Saracens are led on by all the rebellious spirits of hell ; but God does not permit these malignant powers to bestow victory on his enemies. He despatches the archangel Michael to discomfit them, and, after the supernatural powers have retired from the field of battle, the Christians recover the day by their own valour. Soliman is compelled to fly. The sorcerer Ismeno stops him on his route. By means of his magic art, he conducts him back to Jerusalem, concealed from the eyes of his enemies ; and, at the same time, predicts to him the future conquests of the Mahomedans, and the glory of Saladin, whom he represents as descending from Soliman. He introduces him to the councils of Aladin, at the moment when the chiefs are preparing to capitulate ; and Soliman, by his presence, restores the courage of the dispirited warriors. On the other part, the knights whom Armida had seduced, return to the camp during the battle. They relate to Godfrey the manner in which they had been made prisoners by that sorceress ; how they had experienced the power of her enchantments ; and how she had endeavoured to send them prisoners to the King of Egypt, when Rinaldo, whom they met by the way, delivered them, and Tancred amongst them. Thus the alarm which had spread through the Christian camp, for the safety of Rinaldo, is dissipated, and Peter, the holy hermit, reveals the high destinies which Heaven reserves for his descendants.

The eleventh canto opens with the religious pomp and litanies, with which the Christians invoke the aid of Heaven, during their procession to the Mount of Olives. It is thus that they prepare themselves to assault the city on the fol-

lowing day. The opening of this great day is announced with all that military enthusiasm, which the Italian poets so well know how to represent. The assault and the manner of combat are here described with great truth of costume; and, although Tasso, like all other poets, gives much more consequence to the personal valour of the chiefs, and less to the services of the soldiers than is really due, his description is, yet, that of a real action, and not of a combat of knights-errant. In the midst of the assault, Godfrey of Boulogne, Guelfo of Bavaria, and Raymond of Toulouse, are wounded; and their retreat discourages their soldiers. Argante and Soliman make a furious sortie from the gates of Jerusalem, disperse the Christians, and attempt to fire the wooden tower, on which the warriors were placed for the assault. Tancred and Godfrey, whose wounds had been dressed, resist them, and night separates the combatants.

Clorinda, meanwhile, who had not taken an active part in the battle, wishes to distinguish herself, in the night, by another exploit. She meditates a sortie, in order to burn the wooden tower, which still remained at some distance from the walls. Argante begs to accompany her. The heroine, to avoid being recognised, clothes herself in black armour. The aged slave who accompanies her, and who had known her from her infancy, reveals to her secrets, respecting her birth, before unknown to her. He informs her that she is the daughter of the Queen of Ethiopia; that she is under the protection of Saint George, and that this sainted warrior had often reproached him, in dreams, for not having baptized her. Clorinda, although troubled herself by similar dreams, still persists in her design. The two valiant champions penetrate the Christian lines, and fire the tower; but, as they retire, overwhelmed by numbers, Argante enters Jerusalem by the golden gate, while Clorinda is led off in pursuit of an assailant, and finds on her return the barriers closed against her. She then seeks to escape from the field, in the obscurity of night. Tancred pursues her, and, when they have reached a solitary spot, he challenges the unknown warrior to single combat, deeming him not unworthy of his sword. This combat between two lovers, who do not recognise each other under the shades of night, is the masterpiece of Tasso. The combat itself is painted with matchless force

of colouring.* But, when Clorinda is mortally wounded by her lover, the pathetic attains its greatest height, and poetry has nothing to offer more affecting.

But lo! the fated moment now was come,
The moment, charter'd with Clorinda's doom:
Great Tancred's sword her beauteous bosom tore;
Deep lodg'd the greedy blade, and drank her virgin gore:
Her robe, of golden tissue, that repress
Th' ambitious heavings of her snowy breast,
With the warm stream was fill'd; cold death assail'd
Her bloodless frame; her languid footsteps fail'd:
Tancred with threats the falling fair pursues,
His conquest urges, and his blow renews.
She raises, as she falls, her voice of woe,
And from her lips life's latest accents flow,
Th' infusion of the Spirit from on high,
Spirit of Faith, of Hope, of Charity!
New virtue, by th' Almighty Father given;
For, if in life she spurn'd the laws of Heaven,
He will'd at least, that in her dying hour,
Her contrite soul should own her Saviour's power.
"Friend, I am conquer'd; thou hast pardon free;
And pardon I demand in death from thee;
Not on this frame, which no base fear can know,
But on my parting spirit mercy show:
'Tis for my sinful soul I bid thee pray;
Let rites baptismal wash my guilt away."†

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* *Canto* xii. *st.* 53 to 63.

† Ma ecco omai l' ora fatale è guinta
Che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve;
Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,
Che vi s' immerge, e 'l sangue avido beve.
E la vesta che d' or vago trapunta
Le mammelle stringea tenera e leve,
L' empie d' un caldo fiume; ella già sente
Morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.

Quel segue la vittoria, e la trafitta
Vergine minacciando incalza e preme.
Ella, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta
Movendo, disse le parole estreme.
Parole ch' a lei novo un spirto ditta,
Spirto di fè, di carità, di speme:
Virtù, ch' oi Dio le infonde, e se rubella
In vita fù, la vuole in morte ancella.

Amico, hai vinto, io ti perdon, perdona
Tu ancora, al corpo nò, che nulla pave,
A l' alma si. Deh, per lei prega, e dona
Battesmo a me, ch' ogni mia colpa lave.

In

From her pale lips these languid words that fell,
Such sweetness breathed, divine, ineffable.
As to the hero's heart resistless crept;
His enmity was hush'd, his anger slept,
And straight, compelled by some mysterious force,
Unbidden tears gush'd copious from their source.
Emerging from the hill, a scanty brook,
Not far remote, its murm'ring progress took:
Thither the soul-struck warrior ran, to fill
His hollow helmet at the limpid rill,
Then hasten'd to perform the sad demand;
Some conscious instinct shook his trembling hand,
As from her face, till now unknown, he drew
The helm that cover'd it; he saw, he knew:—
All power of speech, of motion, then was gone;
Ah! cruel sight! ah! knowledge, best unknown!
Nor yet he died; in that momentous hour,
Collecting all the remnant of his power,
Deep in his soul his sorrows he suppress,
And for the solemn office arm'd his breast,
That she, whom late his murd'rous steel had slain,
By water's saving power might live again.
As, from his tongue, Salvation's accents came,
New joy transform'd the virgin's dying frame,
A smile of gladness o'er her features past,
And sweetly tranquil, as she breathed her last,
She seem'd to say, "Earth's vain delusions cease;
"Heaven opens on my eyes; I part in peace."

In queste voci languide, risuona
Un non sò chè di flebile e soave,
Ch' al cor gli serpe, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
E gli occhi a lagrimar gli invoglia e sforza.

Poco quindi lontan, nel sen del monte
Scaturia mormorando un picciol rio;
Egli v' accorse, e l' elmo empie nel fonte
E tornò mesto al grande uffizio e pio.
Tremar senti la man, mentre la fronte
Non conosciuta ancor sciolse e scoprio.
La vidde, e la conobbe, e restò senza
E voce e moto. Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!

Non morì già, che sue virtuti accolse
Tutte in quel punto, e in guardia al cor le mise;
E premendo il suo affanno, a darsi volse
Vita, con l' acqua, a chi col ferro uccise.
Mentre egli il suon de sacri detti sciolse,
Colei di gioia trasmutossi e rise,
E in atto di morir lieto e vivace
Dir parea: S' apre il cielo; io vado in pace.

D'un

O'er her fair face death's livid hue arose;
So, mix'd with violets, the lily shows.
She fix'd her eyes on Heaven; the sun, the sky,
Seem'd to look down in pity from on high:
She waved her hand, and since her lips denied
All power of speech, the pledge of peace supplied.
So pass'd from earthly scenes the maid forgiven;
So her pure spirit fled, redeem'd, to Heaven;
Not death's rude hand her features fair impress'd,
But the calm slumber of unclouded rest.

The despair of Tancred is such as must be excited by so dreadful an incident. But Tasso, true to the sensibility of his nation, which never prolongs excessive grief, and faithful perhaps to the genuine rules of poetry, which ought never to convert into real suffering the pleasures of the imagination, does not allow the reader to dwell on this melancholy catastrophe; and before quitting Tancred, administers to him consolation, by a dream.

CHAPTER XIV.

REMARKS ON TASSO CONCLUDED.

SYMPATHY is, perhaps, the origin of all the pleasures of the mind, and if critics have prescribed other laws and rules of art for appreciating and judging the beautiful, the rest of the world are, nevertheless, governed by their own feelings. A passage which excites a deep interest or awakens our curiosity, which circulates our blood more rapidly, and checks our respiration, which takes possession of our whole heart, and whose fictions wear the semblance of reality, has fully

D'un bel pallor hà il bianco volto asperso,
Come a gigli sarian miste viole,
E gli occhi al cielo affisa, e in lei converso
Sembra per la pietate il cielo e 'l sole.
E la man fredda e nuda alzando verso
Il cavaliero, in vece di parole
Gli dà pegno di pace. In questa forma
Passa la bella donna e par che dorma.

Canto xii. *st.* 64 to 69.

attained the object of its author, and has accomplished the highest effort of art. If, too, the writer of such a fiction has succeeded in exciting so lively an emotion, without giving pain to the reader, without having recourse to pictures of suffering, rather than to moral sentiments, the recollection of such a work is as delightful and as pure as the first impression is powerful. The poetic invention is a subject of admiration to us, after the emotion is calmed ; and we return with pleasure, to indulge a second and a third time, a feeling of the mind which is vehement without being painful. This merit, which gives a charm to romance, and constitutes the excellence of tragedy, is frequently wanting in the epic. We admire the most celebrated poems ; but our admiration is not accompanied by any powerful emotion, by an ardent curiosity to pursue the course of events, or by a very lively interest for the actors. The epic is, therefore, amongst the noble fictions of poetry, that which draws the fewest tears. Tasso, in this respect, has shown himself superior to all his rivals. The romantic interest of Tancred and Clorinda is carried quite as far as in the love romances, whose only object was to awaken the softer feelings of the heart. In the character of Tancred, the bravest, the most generous, and the most loyal of knights, we trace a vein of modesty and melancholy which wins all hearts. Clorinda, in spite of the contrast between her invincible and savage valour, and the mild virtues of the female character, attracts us by her generosity. The catastrophe is the most affecting that any writer of romance has ever invented, or any tragic author has brought on the stage. Although Tasso deprives the generous Tancred, almost in the middle of the poem, of all hope and all object in life, he does not yet destroy the interest of what ensues. The shade of Clorinda seems to attach itself henceforth to this unhappy hero, who never again appears on the scene, without exciting the deepest sympathy in the reader.

The moving tower, with which the Christians had attacked the walls, had been burnt by the united efforts of Clorinda and Argante. Ismeno, to prevent the Christians constructing a new one, by means of his horrid enchantments, places under the guard of demons, the only forest where they could find wood proper for machines of war. The terrors which

these dreaded places inspire are thus communicated to the reader

Then burst upon their ears a sudden sound;
As when an earthquake rocks the groaning ground;
As when the south winds murmur, loud and deep;
As when amid the rocks the billows weep;
The serpent's hiss was there, the wolf's dread howl,
The lion's roar, the bear's terrific growl,
The trumpet's blast, with crushing thunder joined;
Such mingled sounds in one the hideous din combined.*

The most valiant warriors, in vain, successively endeavour to penetrate into this forest, which is surrounded by walls of fire. Tancred alone succeeds; but this hero, a stranger to fear, is overcome by compassion. The tree which he attempts to hew down with his sword, pours forth blood from the wounds which he has inflicted. The voice of Clorinda is heard, and reproaches him with violating the last repose of the dead. She informs him, that the souls of the warriors, who have fallen before Jerusalem, are attached to the trees of this forest, as to a new body, for a certain number of years. Tancred, scarcely trusting his senses, suspects that what he hears is the voice of a sorcerer, and not that of Clorinda. But the uncertainty alone disarms him, and he relents and departs.

The burning days of the dog-star now appear; the sun pours his scorching rays on the sands of the desert; and the army, deprived of water, and choaked with the heat and the dust, faint under the drought. The picture of this dreadful scourge is drawn with a fidelity which no other poet has equalled.

Whene'er the Sun begins his matin race,
Vapours of bloody hue distain his face
And his bright orb surround, a sure presage
Of coming day's intolerable rage.

* Esce allor della selva un suon repente,
Che par rimbombo di terren che treme;
E 'l mormorar degli Austri in lui si sente,
E 'l pianto d' onda che fra scogli geme.
Come rugge il leon, fischia il serpente,
Come urla il lupo, e come l' orso freme
V' odi, e v' odi le trombe, e v' odi il tuono;
Tanti e sì fatti suoni esprime un suono.

Canto xiii. *st.* 21.

Spotted with red, his parting disk he shows,
Unerring token of to-morrow's woes,
And with the future mischief he portends,
To past distress a sting more poignant lends.
While thus he reigns, the despot of the skies,
Where'er unhappy man directs his eyes,
He sees the flow'rs all droop, the leaves grow pale,
The verdure wither, and the herbage fail.
Cleft is the ground: the streams, absorbed, are dry;
All nature's works confess th' inclement sky.
The barren clouds, through air's wide regions spread,
Part into flaky streaks, and flare with red.
The Heavens above like one vast furnace glow,
Nor aught relieves the eye of man below.
Within their caves the silent Zephyrs slept·
The stagnant air unbroken stillness kept;
No wind was there, or 'twas the burning blast
That o'er parch'd Afric's glowing sands had past,
And with a dull and heavy heat oppress'd
The fever'd cheek, dry throat, and lab'ring breast.*

The entire passage is too long for translation, but there is not a single verse in these eleven stanzas, which is not admirable, which does not contribute to the heightening of the

* Non esce il sol giamai ch' asperso e cinto
Di sanguigni vapori entro ed intorno,
Non mostri ne la fronte assai distinto
Mesto presagio d' infelice giorno;
Non parte mai, che 'n rosse macchie tinto,
Non minacci egual noia al suo ritorno;
E non inaspri i già sofferti danni
Con certa tema di futuri affanni.

Mentre gli raggi poi d' alto diffonde,
Quanto d' intorno occhio mortal si gira,
Seccarsi i fiori, e impallidir le fronde,
Assetate languir l' erbe rimira,
E fendersi la terra, e scemar l' onde,
Ogni cosa del ciel soggetta a l' ira;
E le sterili nubi in aria sparse,
In sembianza di fiamme altrui mostrarse.

Sembra il ciel ne l'aspetto atra fornace,
Nè cosa appar che gli occhi almen ristaure;
Ne le spelonche sue zefiro tace,
E 'n tutto è fermo il vaneggiar de l' aure;
Solo vi soffia (e par vampa di face)
Vento, che move da l' arene maure,
Che gravoso e spiacente, e seno e gote
Co' densi fiati ad or ad or percote.

Canto xiii. *st.* 54.

picture, and afford a proof of that profound knowledge of nature, without which a great poet cannot be formed ; for, without it, the enchantments of imagination lose their probability. The prayers of Godfrey obtain at length, from heaven, the rain so ardently desired by the army, which restores health and life to man and to the animal and vegetable creations. But the enchantments of the forest can be destroyed only by Rinaldo. It is he whom God has chosen as the champion destined to conquer Jerusalem ; and Heaven inclines the heart of Godfrey to pardon him, and that of Guelfo to demand his forgiveness.

The importance given by Tasso to the enchantments of the forest, to the power of Ismeno, to that of the Christian magician, and, in general, to all the marvellous and supernatural part of the *Jerusalem delivered*, are treated by Voltaire, in his Essay on Epic Poetry, with a mixture of bitter irony and contempt. But Voltaire, who, in this essay, has proved that genius is independent of the idle rules of the critics, and that the varying taste of nations gives birth to original beauties, to be rightly appreciated only by themselves, ceases to be just and impartial, as soon as superstition is mentioned. He is then no longer a poet or a critic, but the champion only of the philosophy of his age. He drags to the tribunal of reason, or tries by his sceptic prejudices, every belief which he has not himself adopted ; as if it were a question of the abstract truth of poetry, and not of its truth in relation to the hero, the poet, and his readers. Enchantments and incantations are true, with respect to the period of the crusades, when they formed the universal belief. Indeed, the miracles of the monks, and the illusions of demons, are presented to us as historic facts. Although a philosopher might smile at a knight of the twelfth century yielding belief to spirits and magicians, yet an historian would with more reason be ridiculed, who should describe the same knight as professing the opinions of a modern sceptic. We cannot, without depriving history of all interest, disjoin these facts from the belief of the age. Much less, in poetry, can we revive past times, and give them the sentiments of our own days ; and, if the opinions which were peculiar to them, are so repugnant to our own, that even our imagination cannot lend itself to the contemplation of them,

the times when such opinions were prevalent, are out of the bounds of poetry, and cannot be represented to us in an attractive manner. Thus, it may be doubted whether an European poem could please us, founded on the mythologies of the Hindoos, the Chinese, or the Peruvians. But, at the same time, the original poetry of these nations might highly interest us. In fact, in order to render a fiction poetically true, it is, above all things, requisite, that he who relates it should appear persuaded of its truth, and that they who listen to him should possess the grounds of a similar belief, although their reason may reject it. Thus, a Christian poet, who should sing the divinities of India, could never excite our sympathy, since he would not appear to believe what he sang. Thus, the allegory which Voltaire himself substitutes for the marvellous, freezes, instead of warming, the imagination; since it is neither the belief of the poet, nor of the actors, nor of the readers. But, if the marvellous is so closely allied to our prejudices; if it holds a place in our general opinions; if we have even felt it at some period of our lives, and known it felt by others, our imagination, eager for enjoyment, lends itself to the deception, as long as the poet requires. The classical mythology is so familiar to us from our education, that, even at this day, a poet who adopts it without intermixture, may hope to awaken feelings correspondent to the times of antiquity. But the superstition of the middle ages is familiar to us in another manner. It is the malady of our times; it is by an effort that we are freed from it; and we naturally fall into it again, as soon as we allow our reason to slumber.

Voltaire, in wishing to banish the supernatural from poetry, has forgotten that belief is a great enjoyment. It is a want and a desire; dangerous, without doubt; and the theologian, the philosopher, the historian, and the statesman, ought to be on their guard against that avidity, with which, without examination, we seize and adopt the marvellous. But poetry is not required to be jealous of our enjoyments. That is not her province. She does not pretend to instruct. Her only aim is to flatter the imagination; and so far from resisting this soft illusion, her great art is exercised in inducing it. It is an easy thing for Voltaire, or for any man who reasons, to shew that these tales of enchantments, of sorcerers, and of

demons, are idle popular stories ; but no other supernatural belief would have taken such strong hold of our imagination, since no other would have been so familiar to us. No other mythology or allegory could excite in us such lively emotions for Tancred, for Rinaldo, and for the heroes who courageously defy these superhuman powers, since no other could find in us so ready a motive for their adoption.

Two knights are despatched to rescue Rinaldo from the enchantments of Armida. Near Ascalon, they meet a Christian magician, who informs them of the snares which Armida had laid for Rinaldo, and that she had led him to an enchanted island, in the river Orontes, where the sirens sought to seduce him by their songs, and to awaken the love of pleasure in his heart. He had already abandoned himself to fatal repose. Armida approaches to revenge her wrongs, but is herself made captive by the charms of his person ; and she who had abused the power of love, in rendering him the slave of her artifice, now becomes captive in her turn. Armida had then placed Rinaldo on her enchanted car, and had transported him to one of the Fortunate Islands, assured that she should there find neither rivals nor witnesses of her passion. But the power of the Christian magician is superior to that of the enchantress, and the two knights embark in a magic boat, which is swiftly wafted across the Mediterranean. The maritime cities of Syria, Egypt, and Lybia, pass in swift succession before their eyes, and the poet characterizes each in a few words. It is here that we find the celebrated stanza on Carthage :

> Great Carthage prostrate lies ; and scarce a trace
> Of all her mighty ruins, marks the place
> Where once she stood : thus Desolation waits
> On loftiest cities, and on proudest states ;
> Huge heaps of sand, and waving herbage hide
> The pomp of power, the monuments of pride ;
> And yet does man, poor child of earth, presume
> To mourn vain arrogance ! his mortal doom !*

* Giace l alta Cartago, appena i segni
De l' alte sue ruine il lido serba ;
Muoiono le città, muoiono i regni,
Copre i fasti e le pompe arena ed erba ;
E l' uom d' esser mortal par che si sdegni ?
O nostra mente cupida e superba !

Canto XV. *st.* 20.

In some of the succeeding stanzas are foretold the discoveries of Columbus, and those adventurous voyages which have attached the name of an Italian to one of the quarters of the globe.* The two knights, at length, arrive at the enchanted gardens of Armida, which the poet has placed on a mountain in the Islands of the Blest. The description of these beautiful grounds inspires voluptuousness and delight, and the verses themselves have that softness and harmony which dispose to the joys of love which breathe around Armida. In the midst of the feathered choir, the Phœnix sings with human voice.† The warriors discover the two lovers together. They wait, until Armida has wandered from Rinaldo, to shew him, in an enchanted mirror, his effeminate dress, and the image of his soul. But the sight, alone, of their armour is sufficient to excite in the breast of Rinaldo, his former ardour for the field. The exhortations of Ubaldo awaken the blushes of shame; and he departs with the two warriors, in spite of the supplications of Armida, who endeavours to detain him by the most tender and persuasive entreaties, or at least to obtain permission to accompany him. He replies as one whose passion is subservient to his duty, and who awakes from the illusions of love, without renouncing its tenderness. He departs, and leaves her on the shore, where she faints through grief, when she finds that she has not the power to retain him. At length, recovering from her swoon, she destroys the gardens and the enchanted palace, and returns to Gaza, to join the army of the sultan of Egypt.

The Sultan reviews his army, and Tasso describes the soldiers, and the various countries from whence they come, with that fulness of information which can alone give life and truth to the picture.‡ Armida, in the midst of these warriors, offers herself and her kingdom as a reward to him who shall avenge her on Rinaldo; whilst Rinaldo himself, on his return from the coast of Syria, receives from the hands of the Christian enchanter a present of arms, on which are engraved the glorious deeds of the supposed ancestors of the house of Este, from the fall of the Roman empire to the time of the Crusades. The enchanter then speaks of Rinaldo's

* *Canto* xv *st.* 30 to 32. † *Canto* xvi. *st.* 14 and 15.
‡ *Canto* xvii. *st* 4 to 32.

descendants, and, amongst others, announces a hero, whom he extravagantly eulogizes. This is Alfonso II., the last Duke of Ferrara, whom posterity is far from regarding with such favourable eyes, and whose pride and rigour Tasso himself lived to experience.*

Rinaldo, arriving at the camp, and repenting of his errors, which he confesses to Peter the Hermit, is despatched to the enchanted forest. It does not present to him, as to the other warriors, monsters and objects of terror, but all the charms of an earthly paradise, and all the allurements of love.† It is by the image of Armida, that the demons, defenders of this forest, hope to seduce him. She suddenly appears out of one of the trees, and supplicating him to spare her favourite myrtle, throws herself between it and the sword of Rinaldo. But the warrior, convinced that the image before him is nothing more than an empty phantom, redoubles his attack; nor does he cease, though the frightful demons surround and menace him, until the tree falls beneath his sword. The enchantment is thus destroyed, and the forest returns to its natural state. With the trees which are here found, the Christians prepare new machines of war, more ingenious than those which were employed in the first assault, but such as were often constructed in the middle ages. Godfrey disposes every thing for an attack. During the combat, Heaven manifests its assistance in many miraculous ways. The fires of the Saracens are driven back upon themselves; and a rock falls on Ismeno, and crushes him at the moment he is preparing new enchantments. All the host of Heaven, and the souls of all the warriors who had fallen under the walls of Jerusalem, assemble in the air, to share the honour of this last victory. Of the mortal combatants, it is to Rinaldo that Tasso assigns the glory of success. At length, the Christian banner is planted on the rampart.‡ Tancred, in this last battle, encounters Argante, who, in disputing the ground with him, reproaches him with having failed to meet him as he had promised. They both then retire from the fight, and leave the city, to assuage their ancient hatred by single combat. But the fierce Argante, turning his eyes on the ancient

* *Canto* xvii. *st.* 90 to 94. † *Canto* xviii.
‡ *Canto* xviii. *st.* 100.

capital of Judea, about to fall beneath the hands of her enemies, feels his soul subdued at the sight:

> Argantes turning, as their steps they stay'd,
> With thoughtful eye the conquer'd town survey'd.
> Then, marking that the Pagan's shield was gone,
> The gen'rous Tancred cast away his own,
> And cried: "What sudden thoughts across thee come?
> Shrinks then thy heart, presentient of its doom?
> If now prophetic fears thy soul o'erpower,
> Thy weakness visits thee in evil hour."
> "On yon fair town," the Infidel replied,
> "Judæa's scepter'd Queen, and Asia's pride,
> That bows her vanquish'd head, I think with pain,
> While I, to stay her downfall, strive in vain;
> And insufficient shall th' atonement be,
> Though Heaven adjudge thy forfeit head to me." *

Whilst the two chiefs are thus engaged in deadly combat, Tancred, having obtained the advantage, twice offers to the savage Circassian his life and his liberty. Twice, Argante rejects his mercy and renews the contest. He then falls, and dies, as he had lived, a stranger to fear. But Tancred, exhausted by the blood he had lost in the combat, has not strength left to join his comrades, and swoons at a little distance from his adversary.

The Christians, on entering Jerusalem, make a dreadful massacre of all they meet. Aladin alone, with some warriors, and under the protection of Soliman, retires into the tower of David, the last hope of the Saracens. They flatter themselves

> * Quì si fermano entrambi, e pur sospeso
> Volgeasi Argante à la cittade afflitta.
> Vede Tancredi che 'l pagan difeso
> Non è di scudo, e 'l suo lontano ei gitta.
> Poscia lui dice; Or qual pensier t' a preso?
> Pensi ch' è giunta l' ora a te prescritta?
> S' antivedendo ciò timido stai,
> E 'l tuo timore intempestivo omai.
>
> Penso (risponde) à la città del regno
> Di Giudea antichissima regina,
> Che vinta or cade, e in vano esser sostegno
> Io procurai de la fatal ruina.
> E ch' è poca vendetta al mio disdegno
> Il capo tuo che 'l cielo or mi destina.
> Tacque, e incontra si van con gran risguardo,
> Che ben conosce l' un l' altro gagliardo.
>
> *Canto* xix. *st.* 9 and 10

that the army from Egypt may arrive in time for their deliverance. In fact, this army was on its march ; and Godfrey had despatched an esquire of Tancred, named Vafrino, who understood all the languages of the East, to watch its movements. Vafrino is recognized in the Saracen camp by Erminia, and the princess, in love with Tancred, resolves to accompany his esquire back to the Latin camp. As they return together, and approach Jerusalem, they traverse the field of battle, where Argante and Tancred were lying motionless. Erminia, at first sight, believes that Tancred is dead ; but, whilst she presses him in her arms, he betrays signs of life. She closes his wounds and dries them with her tresses ; and meeting some Christian warriors, they, at her request, instead of bearing him to his tent, convey him to Jerusalem. This was the ardent wish of the chief, who, if he were destined to die of his wounds, was desirous of accomplishing his vow, and expiring at the sepulchre of his Redeemer.

The Egyptian army at length arrives in sight of Jerusalem ; and, at sunrise on the ensuing morning, the Christians leave the city to meet it, and offer battle.* All epic poets have painted battles ; all have exhausted on this favourite subject their most brilliant poetry; and none, perhaps, have succeeded in giving real pleasure to their readers. In the midst of his combats and his victories, Rinaldo meets the car of Armida ; but, after having dispersed the band of her lovers, who had conspired against him, he avoids meeting her. In the mean time, Soliman and Aladin view the contest from the tower of David, and descend, with the remainder of the troops, to join in the battle. Aladin encounters Raymond of Toulouse, and the king falls beneath the sword of the aged warrior. Soliman, on the other side, meets Odoardo, a noble chief, and Gildippe, his valiant spouse, whom no danger had ever separated. Both perish by the arm of the Sultan of Nicea.† But this is the last of his victories. Rinaldo rushes to revenge their deaths, and attacks Soliman, who is slain by the Christian chief. Rinaldo then engages Tisaphernes, the last defender of Armida. This princess, surviving all the warriors who had sworn to avenge her, and overpowered by shame and love, attempts to put ar end to her life ; but Rinaldo arrests

* *Canto* xx. † *Canto* xx. *st.* 94 to 100.

her hand, reminds her of his former love, and declares himself her knight. He supplicates her pardon, and succeeds in assuaging her grief. Godfrey now gathers the last laurels of the day. Rimedon and Emireno die by his hand, and Altamoro surrenders himself a prisoner.

> Thus Godfrey conquer'd; nor the sinking Sun
> As yet his full diurnal race had run;
> But, ere his beams retired, the victor-train
> The rescued Town, the sacred Temple gain:
> And thither too, ere yet his blood-stain'd vest
> He laid aside, th' impatient Chieftain prest,
> There hung his arms, there pour'd his votive prayer,
> Kiss'd his loved SAVIOUR's tomb, and bow'd adoring there.*

Of all descriptions of poetry, of all productions of the human mind, the epic poem justly claims the first rank. It is the noblest of all harmonious creations. It is the greatest possible extension given to those laws of symmetry, which, directing all parts to one object, produce, in each, the pleasure and perfection of the whole; which combine unity with variety, and in some sort initiate us into the secrets of creation, by discovering to us the single idea which rules the most dissimilar actions and the most opposite interests. The ode derives its charm from the regular expression of the varied sympathies of the soul. It is the essence of tragedy to combine in one action all subordinate events, and thus to excite our admiration for the unity of the design in a subject which commences in variety. But in the epic, the history of the universe, and that of the terrestrial and celestial powers, is submitted to the same principle of symmetry, and the pleasure which the poet gives is so much the greater as it proceeds from more extensive combinations. Thus the Cathedral of St. Peter's, and the Coliseum, become sublime from their immensity. We seem to behold mountains, which, yielding to a superior power, display the perfection of art in their whole, and in their parts. This unity in combination is the essence of epic poetry. It alone excites our admiration; and without it, we have only a romance in verse, which a truth of detail, a fertility of imagination, and a vivacity of colouring, may invest with charms, but which does not convey a sublime idea of the creative power which gives it birth.

* *Canto* xx. *st.* 144.

The rivalship which it has been attempted to institute between Ariosto and Tasso, and which has for a long time divided Italy on the merits of these two great men, will afford us an opportunity of comparing the romantic with the classical style; not with a view of assigning its poet to each class, but to show how far Tasso is indebted to each. These two kinds of poetry, so opposite in their nature, have received their names from the critics of Germany, who have declared themselves strongly in favour of the romantic, and have considered as the result of system, what was formerly regarded as an excursion of the imagination, and as the violation of acknowledged rules. We must, however, adopt their classification; since, the poetry of almost all the modern nations being of the romantic class, it would be unjust and absurd to judge of it, by other rules than those by which the writers were themselves governed.

The appellation of the Romantic was taken from the Romance language, which owed its birth to the mixture of Latin with the ancient German. In a similar way the manners of Romance were formed from the habits of the people of the North, and the remnants of Roman customs. The civilization of the ancients had not, like ours, a double origin. All was there single and simple. The Germans explain the difference between the ancients or classics, and the moderns or romantic authors, by the difference of religion. They assert that the first, with a material religion, addressed all their poetry to the senses; while the second, whose religion is wholly spiritual, place all their poetry in the emotions of the soul. We may, however, raise many objections to this origin of the two classes of poetry. We may, above all, remark, that, at the epoch which gave birth to the Romantic poetry, in the ages of ignorance and superstition, catholicism was so nearly allied to paganism, that it could not have a directly contrary influence on the poetry which it produced. Whatever we may think of their origin, we must, notwithstanding, acknowledge that the poets of the two epochs had different objects in view. Those of antiquity, aimed at exciting admiration by beauty and by symmetry. Those of modern times, wish to produce emotion by the feelings of the heart, or by the unexpected issue of events. The first placed a high value on a combined whole; the latter

on the effect of particular details. But Tasso has shewn how a man of powerful genius, uniting the two kinds, might be, at once, classical in the plan, and romantic in the painting of manners and situation. His poem was conceived in the spirit of antiquity, and executed in the spirit of the middle ages. Our customs, our education, the most touching passages in our histories, and, perhaps, even the tales of our nursery, always carry us back to the times and manners of chivalry. Every thing connected with that age awakens our sensibility. Every thing, on the contrary, that is derived from the mythological times of antiquity acts only on our memory. The two epochs of civilization were each preceded by their heroic ages. The Grecks ascended to the companions of Herculcs, and we look back to the Paladins of Charlemagne. These two races of heroes are, perhaps, alike the creation of the imagination in a later age; but it is exactly this which renders their relation the more true to the age that has created them. The heroic ages form the ideal of succeeding times. We seek in them the model of perfection which is most in unison with our opinions, our prejudices, our domestic sentiments, politics, and religion. It is, consequently, by a reference to this heroism, that poetry is enabled to exercise her power more strongly over the mind or the heart. Poetry, at least that of the first class, has the same object as every other branch of art. It transports us from the real into an ideal world. All the fine arts seek to retrace those primitive forms of beauty which are not found in the visible world, but the impression of which is fixed in our minds, as the model by which to regulate our judgment. It is not a correct opinion, that the Venus of Apelles was only a combination of all that the painter found most perfect in the most beautiful women. Her image existed in the mind of the artist before this combination. It was after this image that he selected subjects for the various parts. This original image could alone harmonize the various models which he consulted; and this assistance, purely mechanical, to retrace the most beautiful forms, served only to develope his own conception, the idea of beauty, as it is conceived by the mind, and as it can never be identified in any individual form.

In the same manner, we find an ideal image of the beauty

of character, of conduct, of passion, and, I had almost said, of crime, which has not been combined from different individuals; which is not the fruit of observation or of comparison; but which previously subsists in our own mind, and may be considered as the base of our poetic principles. Observation shews us that this idea is not the same in all nations. It is modified by general, and often by unknown causes, which seem to arise almost as much from diversity of origin as from education. The French knight possesses, in our imagination, a different character from that of the knight of Italy, Spain, England, or Germany; and all these champions of modern times differ still more from the heroes of antiquity, and bear the marks of the Romantic race, formed from the mixture of Germans and Latins. We easily pourtray, to our own minds, the modern hero, whose characteristics are universally recognized by all European nations; but we cannot form a just conception of the hero of antiquity, and are obliged to delineate his character from memory and classical recollections, and not from our individual feelings. It is this circumstance, which gives so cold an air to the classical poems of modern times. In the romantic species, the appeal is made directly to our own hearts; in the classical, it seems requisite to consult our books, and to have every feeling and idea justified by a quotation from an ancient author.

We have admired, in Tasso, the antique cast of his poem, and that beauty which results from the unity and regularity of design, and from the harmony of all its parts. But this merit, the principal one, perhaps, in our eyes, is not that which has rendered his work so popular. It is its romantic form, which harmonizes with the sentiments, the passions, and the recollections of Europeans. It is because he celebrates heroes whose type exists in their hearts, that he is celebrated in his turn by the gondoliers of Venice; that a whole people cherish his memory; and that, in the nights of summer, the mariners interchange the sorrows of Erminia and the death of Clorinda.

The genius who gave to Italy the rare honour of possessing an epic poem, and who had rendered illustrious his country and the prince under whom he lived, might justly have looked for that regard and kindness which are not refused to

even the most slender talents. No poet, however, seems to have been more severely disappointed, or exposed to more lasting misfortunes. We have already observed that he was born at Sorrento, near Naples, on the eleventh of March, 1544, and was the son of Bernardo Tasso, a gentleman of Bergamo, who had himself enjoyed a poetical reputation. This was eleven years after the death of Ariosto. Tasso received the rudiments of his education in the college of Jesuits at Naples, and, from the age of eight years, had been remarkable for his talent for poetry. The misfortunes of the Prince of San Severino, in which his father was involved, drove him, soon afterwards, from the kingdom of Naples. After some stay at Rome, he was sent to Bergamo, where he perfected himself in the ancient languages. During the year 1561, he studied the law at Padua. His father was desirous that he should follow that profession rather than the study of poetry, which had not assured to himself either independence or happiness. But the genius of Tasso was invincible. His reputation, as a poet, was already spread abroad, and was the early cause of one of his first vexations. During a visit which he made to Bologna, being accused of having written some satirical sonnets which had given offence to the government, its officers visited his chamber, and seized his papers. Tasso, whose temper was always irascible, regarded it as a stain upon his honour. He retired to Padua, and it was there that he finished, at the age of nineteen, his *Rinaldo*, a poem in twelve cantos. This poem celebrates the loves of Rinaldo of Montalbano, and the fair Clarice, during the early youth of this hero. It is a romance of knight errantry, and is treated in the manner of Ariosto. It was published in 1562, and dedicated to the Cardinal Luigi d'Este, brother of Alfonso II., the then reigning duke of Ferrara. This vain and ostentatious prince, who was sovereign of Ferrara and Modena, from 1559 to 1597, exhausted his estates by his extravagance. He was ambitious of holding the first rank among the princes of Italy, which he endeavoured to do by assuring to himself the protection of the house of Austria, to which he was allied. He welcomed, with ardour, the poet, who became the ornament of his court, but whom he afterwards treated with so much cruelty. Tasso was invited to Ferrara in 1565. He was lodged in the castle, and a revenue

was assigned to him, without imposing on him any duties. From that period he commenced his *Jerusalem delivered*, the fame of which preceded the publication, and which, known only by detached parts, was expected with impatience. In 1571, he accompanied the Cardinal d'Este to Paris, where he was honourably received. Soon after his return, his *Amyntas*, which he had composed without interrupting his other great work, was represented at the court of Ferrara, with universal applause. He now expressed his hope of rivalling Ariosto ; but in a style more elevated than that of the Homer of Ferrara. In a dialogue entitled *Gonzaga*, he had endeavoured to prove that unity ought to prevail in the plan of the epic, and that chivalry, which he really admired and loved, ought to be seriously treated, whilst all the other Italian poets had subjected it to burlesque. His sonnets, of which he wrote more than a thousand, and his other lyric poems, in which he appears to rival Petrarch, and almost to equal him in harmony, sensibility, and delicacy of sentiment, manifest with how pure a flame the passion of love possessed his heart, and how devoted was his soul to all that is great, noble, and elevated. Yet the courtiers amongst whom he lived, reproached him with his enthusiastic devotion to women, and with the day-dreams of love and chivalry, in which he consumed his life.

Tasso, admitted to familiarity with the court, thought himself sufficiently on an equality there, to entertain and declare a passion, the indulgence of which was a source of constant misery to him. We learn from his poems that he was enamoured of a lady of the name of Eleonora ; but he is thought to have been alternately in love with Leonora d'Este, sister of Alfonso ; Leonora di San-Vitale, wife of Giulio di Tiena ; and Lucretia Bendidio, one of the maids of honour to the princess. It appears that he disguised, under the name of the second, the too presumptuous attentions which he had dared to address to the first. Irritable to an excess, imprudent in his discourses, and hurried away by passion, he exhibited, in the moment of danger, a degree of valour worthy of the heroic ages ; but his mind was troubled when he afterwards reflected on his rashness, and on the propriety which he considered that he had violated. A courtier, in whom he had implicitly confided, maliciously betrayed him.

Tasso attacked him with his sword, in the palace of the Duke. His adversary, with his three brothers, who had all at the same moment drawn their swords on the poet, was banished. On another occasion, Tasso aimed a blow at a domestic with his knife, in the apartments of the Duchess of Urbino, the sister of Alfonso, and was in consequence put under arrest. This was in the year 1577. He was then thirty-three years of age. Scarcely had his anger subsided, when he abandoned himself to terror on the consequences of his imprudence, to which the imagination of a poet not a little contributed. His reason became disturbed, and he found means to escape, and fled as far as Sorrento. He afterwards returned, and travelled over all Italy in a state of increasing agitation. Without money, without a passport, without attendants, he presented himself at the gates of Turin, where he was for some time refused admittance. Scarcely was he welcomed, when he fled from the court of the Duke of Savoy, where he imagined he was about to be betrayed. His love-attachment then led him back to Ferrara, where his friends interceded for his pardon, and the Duke, who thought his honour compromised by the most celebrated poet of Italy preferring his complaints, at every court, against the house of Este, showed himself strongly disposed to grant him a kind reception. The poet returned to Ferrara in 1579, at the time of the celebration of the marriage of Alfonso II. with Margaret of Gonzaga. Neglected by the sovereign, in the midst of these festivities, he thought he perceived, in the courtiers and domestics, traces of distrust and contempt, and he abandoned himself to his resentment with his usual violence. It has also been related of him, that one day, at court, when the Duke and the Princess Elconora were present, he was so smitten with the beauty of the Princess, that, in a transport of passion, he approached her and embraced her before all the assembly. The Duke, gravely turning to his courtiers, expressed his regret that so great a man should have been thus suddenly bereft of his reason ; and made this circumstance a pretext for shutting him up in the hospital of St. Anne, an asylum for lunatics, in Ferrara. This anecdote is in itself highly doubtful ; and, even if the confinement in the first instance had been justifiable, the severity with which it was continued arose more from the policy than from the anger of the Duke.

His pride would not permit a man of so much celebrity, whom he had offended, to wander through Italy; and who, after having shed lustre on his own court, might depreciate it, and confer similar glory on another. He wished him to be considered mad, in order to justify his own severity; and, indeed, in the eyes of a selfish and unfeeling prince, accustomed only to the forms of etiquette, insensible to any other motive of action than interest and vanity, Tasso, at all times enthusiastic, impetuous, irritable as a child, and as suddenly soothed, did not widely differ from a deranged person. This imprisonment of the poet was the cause of an entire aberration of mind. He, in turns, imagined that he had held disrespectful language against his prince, had too strongly manifested his love, and had even given cause to suspect his allegiance. He addressed himself to all his friends, to all the princes of Italy, to Bergamo, his paternal city, to the Emperor, and to the Holy Inquisition, imploring from them his liberation. His body became enfeebled by the agitation of his mind. At one time, he thought himself poisoned; at another time, the victim of magic and enchantments; and terrifying apparitions haunted his couch in the sleepless hours of night.

To add to his misfortunes, his poem had been printed without his permission, and from an imperfect copy. Editions were multiplied, without his consent, during the very time of his confinement; and the surprise and enthusiasm of the Italian public gave rise to the most violent literary disputes respecting his *Jerusalem delivered*. The admirers of Ariosto saw, with alarm, a new poet set up as a rival to their idol, and were exasperated by the enthusiastic devotion which some of the friends of Tasso rendered to the poet. Camillo Pelegrini, in 1584, endeavoured to shew how greatly Tasso had excelled Ariosto. This was the signal for a general contest; and the detractors of Tasso used the more violence in the attack, as they considered he had been elevated to an unjust height. Tasso, in the midst of his sufferings and captivity, still preserved all that vigour of mind which had rendered him a poet. He defended himself with warmth, sometimes with wit, often with subtlety. He appealed to the authority of Aristotle, whom his opponents pretended to set up as an arbiter between Ariosto and himself. But he considered himself humiliated by the decision of the Academy

della Crusca of Florence, which declared itself against him, and which was then beginning to acquire that authority over the language, which it has since exercised in Italy. From that period, he probably projected, and, in 1588, commenced, with a broken spirit, the laborious and irksome task of remodelling his poem. It was thus that he composed his *Gerusalemme conquistata*, which he lengthened by four cantos. He suppressed the touching incident of Olindo and Sophronia, which, it was objected, served to divert the interest before the action was commenced. He changed the name of Rinaldo to Ricardo. He represented this hero as one of the Norman conquerors of the kingdom of Naples, and deprived him of all relationship with the house of Este, which he no longer chose to flatter. He corrected words and phrases on which grammatical criticisms had been made; but, at the same time, he deprived his poem of all life and inspiration. Nearly all the stanzas are changed, and almost always for the worse. I have seen, in the Library of Vienna, the manuscript of Tasso, with its numerous alterations. It is a melancholy monument of a noble genius, robbed of its energy and depressed by calamity.

Tasso was confined, seven years, in the hospital; and the voluminous writings which came from his pen during this time failed to convince Alfonso that he was in possession of his reason. The princes of Italy interposed for Tasso with the Duke, whose self-love was interested in resisting all their entreaties; and the more so, because his rivals in glory, the Medici, interfered, with more particular earnestness, to procure the liberation of the poet. Tasso, at length, obtained his freedom, on the fifth of July, 1586, at the instance of Vincenzio Gonzaga, prince of Mantua, on the occasion of his marriage with the sister of Alfonso. After spending some time in Mantua, he proceeded to the kingdom of Naples; but, on his way, he was obliged to write at Loretto, to the Duke of Guastalla, to ask for the loan of a small sum of money, without which he could not proceed on his journey. His affairs, indeed, were at all times deranged, and he always experienced the want of money. There is still preserved a will under his hand, of the year 1573, by which it is seen that his wardrobe was in pledge to the Jews; and he directs, that, after selling his clothes, and discharging

what was owing on them. the rest should be employed in placing a stone, with an inscription, on his father's grave. If the money arising from his effects should not be sufficient, he flatters himself that the Princess Eleonora, through her regard to him, would have the kindness to make up the deficiency. He survived nine years, residing occasionally at Rome and Naples, chiefly in the houses of illustrious and generous friends, who had always difficulty in saving him from the persecutions of fortune.* His last letters are filled with details of his pecuniary embarrassments. At length, the Cardinal Cintio Aldobrandini received him into his house, and had prepared a festival for the occasion, in which it was intended to crown him in the Capitol; but death deprived him of this honour. The poet, whose mind now always dwelt on his health, and who was constantly administering to himself new and powerful medicines, died at Rome, on the twenty-fifth of April, 1595, aged fifty-one.

Although the fame of Tasso rests on his *Jerusalem delivered*, another of his works, the *Amyntas*, has attained a just celebrity. The imitation of the ancients had, at an early period, given a pastoral poetry to the Italians. Virgil had composed eclogues, and the moderns thought themselves obliged to do the like. The imitation of this description of poetry may be considered as less servile, since the ideal of country life is nearly the same with the ancients and with ourselves. The eclogues of Virgil paint neither what is, nor what should be, but rather the dreams of happiness, inspired by the sight of the country, and the simplicity, peace, and innocence, which we love to contrast with real life. The Italian tongue seemed better adapted than any other, by its simplicity and grace, to express the language of people, whom we figure to ourselves as perfectly infantine in their manners. The beauty of the climate, the charms of contemplation and indolence in these happy countries, seem to dispose us to the dreams of rural life; and the manners of the Italian peasants approach nearer to the pastoral character than those of any other people. The poet was not obliged to turn his steps to Arcadia. The hills of Sorrento, where Tasso was born, the borders of the Sebeto, or some silent and retired valley in the kingdom of Naples,

* Tasso, *edit. Veneta*, t. x. p. 68.

might, with equal propriety, become the scene for his ideal shepherds, without renouncing the manners and customs of his times. It is thus that Tasso, in his *Jerusalem delivered*, has described as a modern shepherd, though at the same time with much ideal and poetic effect, the old man who afforded an asylum to Erminia.

The numerous Italian poets who have also composed Bucolics, had adopted another system. Sanazzaro, the most celebrated amongst them, of whom we shall speak in the next chapter, proposed to himself a close imitation of Virgil. He took his shepherds from the fabulous ages of Greeee, and adopted the Grecian mythology. The French pastoral poets, and Gessner among the Germans, followed in the same path, and were, in my opinion, all in error. The heart and the imagination do not easily receive impressions, to which they are such entire strangers. We willingly adopt many ideas which are beyond the range of our knowledge; but it is with repugnance that we receive, as the foundation of our poetical belief, what we know to be false. Apollo, fauns, nymphs, and satyrs, never make their appearance in modern poetry without a chilling effect. Their names alone lead us to compare and to judge, and this circumstance is directly opposed to all excitement, sensibility, and enthusiasm.

Agostino Beccari, a poet of Ferrara, (1510—1590), gave a new character to Bucolic poetry, and was the creator of the genuine pastoral drama. His piece entitled *Il Sagrifizio*, was represented in 1554, in the palace of Hercules II. then duke of Ferrara, and was printed in the following year. Beccari, like Sanazzaro, places his shepherds in Arcadia, and adopts the manners and mythology of antiquity; but he connects their conversations by the action, or rather by an union of dramatic actions. During the annual festival of Pan, which is celebrated between the mountains of Menalus and Erimanthus, three couple of rustic lovers, separated by various chances, are re-united by the means of two aged shepherds, and become happy, in spite of the snares which a satyr spreads for the shepherdesses, and the jealousy with which Diana inculcates a cold indifference in her nymphs. A chorus and songs are intermixed with this piece, the music of which had some celebrity; but the five long acts of which it is composed are frigid and dull. The personages unceasingly discourse,

but never act. Their languishing conversations create in us a distaste for Arcadian love ; and a satyr and a drunken hind, who were intended to entertain the spectators, revolt us by their rude attempts at gaiety and wit.

Eighteen years afterwards, in 1572, Tasso produced his *Amyntas*, the idea of which he owed in part to the *Sagrifizio* of Beccari. This piece, also, belongs to the infancy of the dramatic art. However far removed these pastorals might be from the mysteries by which the theatre had been renewed, it is doubtful whether they were at all superior to them ; for life and action and interest are, at least, as necessary to the drama as a strict observance of rules, and a regard to the unities. The *Amyntas*, like the *Sagrifizio*, and the *Orfeo* of Politiano, is nothing more than a tissue of ill-connected eclogues. But the talents evinced in the details, the charms of the style, and the colouring of the poetry, atone for all defects; and the illustrious bard has succeeded even in this ill-chosen description of poetry, in erecting a monument worthy of his genius.

The plot of the *Amyntas* is simple. Amyntas is enamoured of Sylvia, who disdains his love. He delivers her from the hands of a satyr, who had carried her off; but obtains, for his services, no token of gratitude. She joins the other nymphs in the chace, and after having wounded a wolf, she flies from him, with the loss of her veil, which is found torn and stained with blood. The shepherds inform Amyntas, that Sylvia has fallen a prey to the wolves which she had attacked. He resolves to die, and precipitates himself from the summit of a rock. A shepherd comes to announce his death on the stage, at the moment when Sylvia is relating how she had escaped from the jaws of the wolf, to which, it was supposed, she had fallen a prey. Insensible until this moment, she is now moved with pity, on hearing that Amyntas has died for her. She goes in search of his body, to give it burial, and resolves to follow him to the tomb ; when it is announced that Amyntas is only bruised by his fall, and they are thenceforth happy in each other's love. The whole of this action, very improbable, and ill connected, passes behind the scenes. Each act, of which there are five, commences by the recital of an unexpected catastrophe. But the success of the *Amyntas* was owing less to the interest of the dramatic

part, than to the sweetness of the poetry, and to the voluptuousness and passion that breathe in every line. All other thoughts, all other feelings, seemed banished from Arcadia. The shepherds speak incessantly of dying, and still their griefs have in them nothing sombre or rude. They are the milder sorrows of love, which inspire a sort of illusory enjoyment.

This impression, however, is sometimes weakened by the *concetti*, or affected contrast of words and ideas, which began to be introduced about this period, for the second time, into Italian poetry ; and which, inviting imitation by an appearance of wit and ingenious invention, subjected it, in the succeeding age, to the empire of bad taste. Thus love is made to say, in the prologue :

> But this she knows not; she is blind; not I,
> Whom blind the vulgar blind have falsely called.*

In another place, Daphne is made to say :

> Ungraceful was my grace, and to myself
> Unpleasing, all that others pleased in me.†

This play on words, of which Tasso affords a lamentable precedent, often injures his style, and chills our feelings in his *Jerusalem delivered.* It occurs frequently in his sonnets ; and was more easily imitated than his beauties. In other points of view, his *Amyntas* was, for some time, a model which all authors thought themselves bound to copy. At the close of the sixteenth century, twelve or fifteen Italian poets published pastoral dramas. Several ladies, a sovereign Prince of Guastalla, and a Jew, named Leon, attempted the same description of poetry. Others, ambitious of passing for original poets, whilst they were nothing more than copyists, transferred the scene to the borders of the sea, and gave to the public piscatory dramas, as before we had piscatory and marine eclogues. The most celebrated of these compositions is the *Alcæus* of Antonio Ongara, which, for beauty of versification, will bear comparison with the works of the first

* Ciò non conosce ; e cieca ella, e non io
Cui cieco, a torto, il cieco volgo appella.

† E m' era
Malgrata la mia gratia, e dispiacente
Quanto di me piaceva altrui.

poets. But the author followed so closely the footsteps of Tasso in the weaving of his plot, and in the incidents, differing only in the scene, which is transferred to the abodes of fishermen, that his *Alcæus* may with propriety be termed a marine *Amyntas*.

Tasso, and the writers of dramatic pastorals who have succeeded him, have used in their dialogues a versification which served as a model to Metastasio, and which, after having been admitted as the language of the lyric drama, is found to be equally well adapted to tragedy. This is the iambic without rhyme, *verso sciolto*, intermixed, whenever a more lively expression is requisite, with verses of six syllables. When the language becomes more ornamented, and the imagination takes a wider range, it is relieved by rhymes. The higher blank verse of five iambics, which possesses both dignity and ease, and which holds a place between eloquence and poetry, is not, perhaps, in all the movements of tenderness and passion, sufficiently harmonious ; and the intervention of a short verse relieves it, and gives it a musical and pleasing expression. In the same manner, a mixture of rhyme, regular lines, and even strophes in the chorus, carries us easily, and almost imperceptibly, from the elevated language of conversation to the highest order of lyric poetry. We seem to feel all the musical charm of the language which Tasso has employed, in the following verses of the first act, where Amyntas recounts his first falling in love :

> While yet a boy, scarce tall enough to gather
> The lowest hanging fruit, I became intimate
> With the most lovely and beloved girl
> That ever gave to the winds her locks of gold.
> Thou know'st the daughter of Cydippe and
> Montano, who has such a store of herds,
> Sylvia, the forest's honour, the soul's fire ?*

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* Essend' io fanciulletto, si che a pena
Giunger potea, con la man pargoletta,
A corre i frutti da i piegati rami
Degli arboscelli, intrinseco divenni
De la più vaga e cara verginella
Che mai spiegasse al vento chioma d'oro.
La figliuola conosci di Cidippe
E di Montan, ricchissimo d' armenti,
Silvia, honor de le selve, ardor de l' alme ;

Of her I speak. Alas ! I lived, one time,
So fastened to her side, that never turtle
Was closer to his mate, nor ever will be.
Our homes were close together, closer still
Our hearts; our age conformable, our thoughts
Still more conformed. With her, I tended nets
For birds and fish; with her, followed the stag,
And the fleet hind; our joy and our success
Were common : but in making prey of animals,
I fell, I know not how, myself a prey.

Tasso composed a prodigious number of works. The complete collection of them forms twelve volumes in quarto ; but all that he has left is not equally worthy of his genius. Two entire volumes are filled with prose ; almost the whole of which consists of polemic criticism, and is wanting in ease and elevation of style. The poet was accustomed to study harmony and dignity only in his verse. He wrote a comedy called *Gli Intrighi d'Amore.* This was a description of writing in which, from the original bent of his mind, and his melancholy temperament, he was little qualified to succeed : yet the dialogue possesses both facility and grace. Towards the close of his life, he undertook a poem on the creation, *Le sette giornate del Mondo creato ;* but his mind was exhausted by sufferings, and his poem is remarkable only for the eloquence of the style, and the beauty of some of the descriptive parts. A tragedy which he wrote, *Il Torrismondo,* obtained a higher degree of reputation. He composed it, during his confinement in the hospital, and published it in 1587, with a dedication to the Prince Gonzaga, to whom he owed his liberation. The subject is, probably, entirely his own invention. A king of the Ostrogoths marries his own sister, mistaking

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Di questa parlo : ahi lasso, vissi à questa
Così unito alcun tempo, che frà due
Tortorelle più fida compagnia
Non sarà mai ne fue ;
Congiunti eran gli alberghi,
Ma più congiunti i cori :
Conforme era l' etate
Ma 'l pensier più conforme.
Seco tendeva insidie con le reti
Ai pesci ed agli augelli, e seguitava
I cervi seco, e le veloci dame ;
E 'l diletto e la preda era commune.
Ma mentre io fea rapina d' animali
Fui, non sò come, à me stesso rapito.

her for a foreign princess. But, agreeably to the false idea which the Italians at that time possessed of the dramatic art, there is no real action in this piece. It is composed of recitals of what passes off the stage, and of conversations which prepare new incidents. There is, at the close of each act, a chorus of persons who sing odes or *canzoni*, on the inconstancy of all sublunary things. Some scenes are beautifully developed, but an ill-judged imitation of the ancients has deprived the poet of the vigour of his genius. The verses, *versi sciolti*, possess dignity, and sometimes eloquence ; but the piece is, on the whole, cold and uninteresting. The chorus alone, at the conclusion, touches our hearts ; for the poet, in writing it, applied it to himself and his misfortunes, and to those illusions of glory, which now seemed to fade before his eyes.

As torrents, rushing from their Alpine height,
As forked lightnings fly
Athwart the summer sky,
As wind, as vapour, as the arrow's flight,
Our glories fade in night;
The honour of our name is sped,
Like a pale flower that droops its languid head.

The flattering forms of Hope no more prevail;
The palm and laurel fade;
While, in the gathering shade,
Come sad lament, and grief, and sorrow pale;
Nor Love may aught avail,
Nor friendship's hand can bring relief,
To check our flowing tears, or still our lonely grief.*

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* E come alpestree rapido torrente,
Come acceso baleno
In notturno sereno,
Come aura, ò fumo, ò come stral repente,
Volan le nostre fame; ed ogni onore
Sembra languido fiore.

Che più si spera, o che s' attende omai?
Dopo trionfo e palma,
Sol quì restano all' alma
Lutto e lamenti, e lagrimosi lai.
Che più giova amicizia ò giova amore?
Ahi lagrime! ahi dolore!

CHAPTER XV.

STATE OF LITERATURE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—TRISSINO, RUCELLAI, SANAZZARO, BERNI, MACHIAVELLI, PIETRO ARETINO, &c.

Our three last chapters were devoted to two illustrious poets, who elevated themselves, in the sixteenth century, above all their rivals, and whose fame, passing beyond the bounds of Italy, had extended itself over all Europe. In tracing the history of the literature of Italy, it is important to distinguish the most remarkable of that body of orators, scholars, and poets, who flourished in the sixteenth century, and, more particularly, during the pontificate of Leo. X. ; and who gave to Europe an impulse in letters, the influence of which is felt to the present day.

The study of the ancients, and the art of poetry, had been universally encouraged during the fifteenth century. All the free cities, as well as the sovereigns of Italy, endeavoured to assume to themselves the glory of extending their protection to literature. Pensions, honours, and confidential employs, were bestowed on men who had devoted themselves to the study of antiquity, and who best knew how to expound and to contribute to the restoration of its treasures. The chiefs of the republic of Florence, the Dukes of Milan, of Ferrara, and of Mantua, the Kings of Naples, and the Popes, were not merely friends of science. Having themselves received classical educations, they were, almost all, better acquainted with the ancient languages, with the rules of Greek and Latin poetry, and with all relating to antiquity, than the greater part of our scholars of the present day. This universal patronage of letters was not, however, of lasting duration. The rulers of states even pursued, in the sixteenth century, a contrary course ; but it was not sufficient to arrest the impression which had been made, and to check the impulse already given.

The first persecution, which letters experienced in Italy, dates from the middle of the fifteenth century. It was short-lived, but violent, and has left melancholy traces in the history of literature. The city of Rome was desirous, after

the examples of other capitals, of founding an academy, consecrated to letters and to the study of antiquity. The learned popes, who had been elevated to the chair of St. Peter, in the fifteenth century, had beheld with satisfaction, and encouraged this literary zeal. A young man, an illegitimate son of the illustrious house of San Severino, but who, instead of assuming his family appellation. embraced the Roman name of Julius Pomponius Lætus, after having finished his studies under Lorenzo Valla, succeeded him, in 1457, in the chair of Roman eloquence. He assembled around him, at Rome, all those who possessed that passion for literature and for ancient philosophy, by which the age was characterized. Almost all were young men ; and, in their enthusiasm for antiquity, they gave themselves Greek and Latin names, in imitation of their leaders. In their meetings, it is said, they declared their predilection for the manners, the laws, the philosophy, and even the religion of antiquity, in opposition to those of their own age. Paul II. who was then Pope, was not, like many of his predecessors, indebted to a love of letters for his elevation to the pontificate. Suspicious, jealous, and cruel, he soon became alarmed at the spirit of research and enquiry which marked the new philosophers. He felt how greatly the rapid progress of knowledge might contribute to shake the authority of the Church, and he viewed the devotion of these scholars to antiquity, as a general conspiracy against the state and the holy faith. The academy, of which Pomponius Lætus was the chief, seemed particularly to merit his attention. In the midst of the Carnival, in 1468, whilst the people of Rome were occupied with the festival, he arrested all the members of the academy who were then to be found in the capital. Pomponius Lætus alone was absent. He had retired to Venice, the year after the elevation of Paul II. to the pontificate, and had resided there three years ; but, as he held a correspondence with the academicians at Rome, the Pope beheld in him the chief of the conspiracy, and procured his apprehension, through the favour of the Venetian Senate. The academicians were then imprisoned and consigned to the most cruel tortures. One of the number, Agostino Campano, a young man of great expectations, expired under his sufferings. The others, among whom were Pomponius himself and Platina, the historian of the Popes, underwent the ordeal, without the

confession of any criminal motive being extorted from them. The Pope, exasperated at their obstinacy, repaired himself to the castle of St. Angelo, and ordered the interrogatories to be repeated under his own eyes; not upon the supposed conspiracy, but on subjects of faith, in order to detect the academicians in some heretical doctrines; but in this he was disappointed. He declared, however, that any person who should name the academy, either seriously or in jest, should thenceforth be considered a heretic. He detained the unfortunate captives a year in prison; and, when he at length released them, it was without acknowledging their innocence. The death of Paul II. put an end to this system of persecution. Sixtus IV. his successor, confided to the care of Platina, the library of the Vatican, and he allowed Pomponius Lætus to re-commence his public lectures. The latter succeeded in re-assembling his dispersed academicians. He was esteemed for his probity, his simplicity, and his austerity of manners. He devoted his life to the study of the monuments of Rome; and it is more particularly owing to him, that we have been enabled to form a correct judgment on its antiquities. He died in 1498. His death was regarded as a public calamity, and no scholar had, for a long period, obtained such distinguished obsequies.

The persecution of Paul II. was a direct attack upon literature. But the public calamities which succeeded, overwhelmed all Italy, and reached every class of society, at the same moment. They commenced in the year 1494, with the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. The sacking of cities, the rout of armies, and the misfortunes and death of a great number of distinguished men; evils, always accompanying the scourge of war; were not the only fatal consequences of this event. It was a death-blow to the independence of Italy; and, from that period, the Spaniards and the Germans disputed the possession of her provinces. After a series of ruinous wars and numberless calamities, fortune declared herself in favour of Charles V. and his son. The Milanese and the kingdom of Naples remained under the sovereignty of the house of Austria; and all the other states, which yet preserved any independence, trembled at the Austrian power, and dared to refuse nothing to the wishes of the Imperial ministers. All feeling of national pride was destroyed. A

sovereign prince could not afford an asylum, in his own states, to any of his unfortunate subjects, whom a viceroy might choose to denounce. The entire face of Italy was changed. Instead of princes, the friends of arts and letters, who had long reigned in Milan and Naples, a Spanish governor, distrustful and cruel, now ruled by the aid of spies and informers. The Gonzagas of Mantua plunged into pleasures and vice, to forget the dangers of their situation. Alfonso II., at Modena and Ferrara, attempted, by a vain ostentation, to maintain the appearance of that power which he had lost. In place of the republic of Florence, the Athens of the middle ages, the nurse of arts and sciences, and in the place of the early Mediei, the enlightened restorers of philosophy and letters, three tyrants, in the sixteenth century, succeeded each other in Tuscany: the ferocious and voluptuous Alexander; Cosmo I., founder of the second house of Medici, who rivalled his model and contemporary, Philip II., in profound dissimulation and in cruelty; and Francis I., his son, who, by his savage suspicion, carried to its height the oppression of his states. Rome also, which, at the commencement of the century, had possessed, in Leo X., a magnanimous pontiff, a friend of letters, and a generous protector of the fine arts and of poetry, was now become jealous of the progress of the Reformation, and only occupied herself in resisting the dawning powers of the human intellect. Under the pontificates of Paul IV., Pius IV., and Pius V., (1555-1572), who were elevated by the interest of the Inquisition, the persecution against letters and the academies was renewed, in a systematic and unrelenting manner.

Such, notwithstanding, had been the excitement of the human mind in the preceding century, and so thickly were the germs of literature scattered from one end of Italy to the other, by an universal emulation, that no other country can be said to have raised itself to a higher pitch of literary glory. Among the numbers of men who had devoted themselves to letters, Italy produced, at this glorious epoch, at least thirty poets, whom their contemporaries placed on a level with the first names of antiquity, and whose fame, it was thought, would be commensurate with the existence of the world. But even the names of these illustrious men

begin to be forgotten ; and their works, buried in the libraries of the learned, are, now, seldom read.

The circumstance of their equality in merit, has, doubtless, been an obstacle to the duration of their reputation. Fame does not possess a strong memory. For a long flight, she relieves herself from all unnecessary incumbrances. She rejects, on her departure, and in her course, many who thought themselves accepted by her, and she comes down to late ages, with the lightest possible burthen. Unable to choose between Bembo, Sadoleti, Sanazzaro, Bernardo Accolti, and so many others, she relinquishes them all. Many other names will also escape her ; and we perceive the blindness of our presumption, when we compare the momentary reputations of our own day with the glory of the great men of antiquity. The latter, we behold conspicuous through a succession of ages, like the loftiest summits of the Alps, which, the farther we recede from them, appear to rise the higher.

But what most contributed to injure the fame of the illustrious men of the sixteenth century, was the unbounded respect which they professed for antiquity, and the pedantic erudition which stifled their genius. Their custom, also, of writing always after models, which were not in harmony with their manners, their characters, and their political and religious opinions ; and their efforts to revive the languages in which the great works which they admired were composed, materially tended to this result. It has long been said, that he who only translates will never be translated ; and he who imitates, renounces at the same time the hope of being imitated. Still, the noble efforts of these studious men in the cause of letters, the recollections of their past glory, and the celebrity which yet attaches to them, merit an enquiry, on our part, into the history of their most distinguished scholars.

We have already spoken of Trissino, in mentioning his epic poem of *Italia liberata*, and we have seen how much this long expected work disappointed the general expectation. It is possible, however, to fail in writing an epic poem, and still to possess claims to distinction. Gian-Giorgio Trissino had, in fact, sufficient merit to justify that celebrity, which, during a whole century, placed his name in the first rank in

Italy. Born at Vicenza, in 1478, of an illustrious family, he was equally qualified, by his education, for letters and for public business. He came to Rome when he was twenty-four years of age, and had resided there a considerable time, when Pope Leo X., struck by his talents, sent him as his ambassador, to the Emperor Maximilian. Under the pontificate of Clement VII. he was also charged with embassies to Charles V. and to the Republic of Venice, and was decorated by the former with the order of the Golden Fleece.* In the midst of public affairs he cultivated, with ardour, poetry and the languages. He was rich ; and possessing a fine taste in architecture, he employed Palladio to erect a country-house, in the best style, at Criccoli. Domestic vexations, and more particularly a law-suit with his own son, embittered his latter days. He died in 1550, aged seventy-two.

The most just title to fame possessed by Trissino, is founded on his *Sofonisba*, which may be considered as the first regular tragedy since the revival of letters ; and which we may, with still greater justice, regard as the last of the tragedies of antiquity, so exactly is it founded on the principles of the Grecian dramas, and, above all, on those of Euripides. He wants, it is true, the genius which inspired the creators of the drama at Athens, and a more sustained dignity in the character of the principal personages ; but, to a scrupulous imitation of the ancients, Trissino had the art of uniting a pathetic feeling, and he succeeded in moving his audience to tears.

Sophonisba, daughter of Asdrubal, and wife of Syphax, king of Numidia, after having been promised to his rival, Massinissa, learns in Cirtha, where she is shut up, the defeat and captivity of her husband. Soon afterwards, Massinissa himself enters the same city, at the head of his army, and finds the queen surrounded by a chorus of women of Cirtha. Sophonisba, supported by the chorus, implores Massinissa to spare her the humiliation of being delivered, a captive to the Romans. Massinissa, after having shewn how far he is himself dependent on that people, and how difficult it will he to grant this favour, pledges, at the same time, his word to

* It should seem that Charles V. permitted him only to add this decoration to his arms, without enrolling him amongst the knights.

the queen, that she shall not be delivered up alive. But soon after, at the same time that his former love for the queen revives, the difficulty of rescuing Sophonisba increases, in consequence of the Romans entering the city in force; and he dispatches a messenger to Lælius, to announce to him that he had married Sophonisba, in order that she might not be regarded as an enemy. Lælius warmly reproaches Massinissa with the marriage, as rendering him the ally of the greatest enemies of Rome. On the other part, Syphax, now a prisoner, accuses Sophonisba of being the cause of his calamity; and rejoices to find that his enemy has married her, as he feels assured that she will drag him into the same abyss into which he had himself been precipitated by her. Massinissa resists, with firmness, the orders of Lælius and Cato, to relinquish Sophonisba, as the captive of Rome: but when Scipio, in his turn, presses him, employing alternately authority, persuasion and friendship, Massinissa, unable farther to excuse himself, yields to his entreaties; but demands permission to fulfil the promise he had given to Sophonisba, not to deliver her alive to the Romans. He then sends to her, by the hands of a messenger, a cup of silver, with poison, informing her, that as he could not keep the first part of his promise, he at all events assures her of the second, and desiring her if the occasion should become urgent, to conduct herself in a manner worthy of her noble blood. Sophonisba, in fact, after having sacrificed to Proserpine, swallows the poison, and returns on the stage to die, in the arms of her sister and of the women who compose the chorus. Massinissa, who had not relinquished the hope of saving her, and who intended to rescue her in the night, and to transport her to Carthage, returns too late to execute his project; but he places her son and her sister in safety. The piece is not divided into acts and scenes, because this division did not exist in the Grecian drama, and was subsequently invented; but the chorus, who constantly occupy the stage, and mingle in the dialogue, sing, when left alone, odes, and lyric stanzas, which by dividing the action, give repose to the piece.

It would, doubtless, be easy to multiply criticisms on this piece, written, as it was, in the infancy of the dramatic art, and without a knowledge of stage effect. It is unnecessary to animadvert either on the narrative, in which Sophonisba

recounts to her sister the history of Carthage, from the reign of Dido to the second Punic war; on the improbability of a chorus of female singers always occupying the stage, even when the soldiers of the enemy enter the city as conquerors; on the entire want of interest in the characters of Syphax, Lælius, Cato, and Scipio himself; on the weakness of Sophonisba, who, on the day that her husband is made prisoner, marries his enemy; or, in short, on the contemptible part assigned to Massinissa. It is easy to any one to urge these defects, and there is no fear of their being imitated. But it is to be regretted that the modern stage has not profited more by the Greek model which Trissino has given. His chorus, above all, is in the true spirit and character of antiquity. With the ancients, their whole lives were public; their heroes lived in the midst of their fellow citizens, and their princesses amongst their women. The chorus, the friends and comforters of the unhappy, transport us to the ancient times and ancient manners. We cannot, and ought not to introduce them into pieces, of which the subject is modern; but, in excluding them from those dramas which are founded on the history and mythology of the ancients, and substituting in their stead, the presence of modern confidants, we ascribe to the Greeks the customs and language of our own age and of our own courts.

The poetry of Trissino is equally deserving of praise. He had remarked that the Greeks, in their best works, did not confine tragedy to the style of a dignified conversation; but lavished on it the richness of their numerous metres, applying them to the various situations in which their actors were placed; sometimes confining them to iambics, which contributed only to a somewhat loftier expression; and sometimes raising them to the most harmonious lyric strophes. He saw also that they proportioned the flight of their imagination to the metre which they employed; speaking, by turns, as orators or poets, and rising, in their lyric strophes, to the boldest images. Trissino alone, among their modern imitators, has preserved this variety. The usual language of his heroes is in *versi sciolti*, blank verse: but, according to the passions which he wishes to express, he soars to the most varied forms of the ode, or *canzone*, and by this more poetical language he proves that the pleasure of the drama consists not wholly in

the imitation of nature, but also in the ideal beauty of that poetic world which the author substitutes for it.

Trissino, like the Greeks, has not treated of a love-intrigue, but of a great political revolution, the fall of an ancient kingdom, and the public misfortunes of a heroine, who, to the pride of royalty, united the sentiments and virtues of a citizen of Carthage. He has placed this action before the eyes of his audience, more strongly than those who have succeeded him. There are, it must be acknowledged, many recitals made by the messengers, and all are too long; but we see Sophonisba expecting and receiving the intelligence of the defeat of Syphax, and of the loss of her kingdom; we see her meet Massinissa, supplicate him, and obtain his promise of protection; we see the Numidian prisoners conducted before the Roman Prætor; Massinissa, resisting Lælius and Cato, but yielding to Scipio; and Sophonisba, expiring on the stage. It is from this last scene that I shall borrow a fragment, to show the powers of Trissino in the pathetic.

Sophonisba, led on the stage, after having swallowed poison, commends her memory to the women of Cirtha, and implores Heaven that her death may contribute to their repose. She bids farewell to the beloved light of day, and to the smiling face of earth. Turning, then, to her sister Erminia, who requests to follow, and to die with her, she entrusts to her care her infant son, and obtains from Erminia a promise that she will live for his sake.

SOPH. That thou thy pity giv'st is to my heart
Sweet solace, and to death I go resign'd!
Yet, from my hands, receive my darling son.
ERM. Beloved gift, and from a hand beloved.
SOPH. Henceforth, let him in thee a mother find.
ERM. Willingly, since of thee he is deprived.
SOPH. O son, sweet son, when of thy mother's breast
Thou hast most need, I'm torn from thee for ever.*

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* SOF. Molto mi piace che tu sia disposta
Di compiacermi, or morirò contenta;
Ma tu, sorella mia, primieramente
Prendi 'l mio figliolin da la mia mano.
ERM. O da che cara man, che caro dono!
SOF. Ora in vece di me gli sarai madre.
ERM. Cosi farò, poiche di voi fia privo.
SOF. O figlio, figlio, quando più bisogno
Hai de la vita mia, da te mi parto.

ERM.

ERM. Alas! such sorrow who can e'er survive?
SOPH. Time is the assuager of all mortal grief.
ERM. Sister, I pray thee, let me follow thee!
SOPH. Ah! no, my cruel death may well suffice.
ERM. Fortune, how swift thou robb'st me of all bliss.
SOPH. O my dear mother, thou art far away!
O that I might, at least, behold thy face
Once more, once more embrace thee, ere I die!
ERM. Thrice happy she, whose lot is not to see
This cruel stroke of fate; for sorrow, when
Narrated, carries not so keen a barb.
SOPH. O my fond father, brothers, all beloved,
Long is it since I saw you, and, alas!
I see you now no more. The gods befriend you!
ERM. Ah! what a treasure they must this day lose!
SOPH. My sweet Erminia, in this mournful hour
Thou art my father, brother, sister, mother!
ERM. Thrice happy could I but for one suffice!
SOPH. Ah me! my strength forsakes me, and I feel
Life ebb apace. I struggle, now, with death.
ERM. Alas! how heavy falls thy fate on me!
SOPH. But who are you? whence come they? and whom seek they
ERM Ah! wretched me! what do thine eyes behold?
SOPH. What! seest thou not this arm that drags me down?

ERM. Oimè, come farò fra tanta doglia?
SOF. Il tempo suol far lieve ogni dolore.
ERM. Deh, lasciatemi ancor venir con voi.
SOF. Basta, ben basta de la morte mia.
ERM. O fortuna crudel, di che mi spogli!
SOF. O madre mia, quanto lontana siete!
Almen potuto avessi una sol volta
Vedervi ed abbracciar ne la mia morte.
ERM. Felice lei, felice, che non vede
Questo caso crudel: ch' assai men grave
Ci pare il mal che solamente s' ode.
SOF. O caro padre, o dolci miei fratelli!
Quant' è ch' io non vi veddi, ne più mai
V'aggio a vedere! Iddio vi faccia lieti.
ERM. O quanto, quanto ben perderann' ora!
SOF. Erminia mia, tu sola a questo tempo
Mi sei padre, fratel, sorella, e madre.
ERM. Lassa, valessi pur per un di loro.
SOF. Or sento ben che la virtù mi manca
A poco a poco, e tuttavia cammino.
ERM. Quanto amaro è per me questo viaggio!
SOF. Che veggio quì? Che nuova gente è questa?
ERM. Oimè infelice? Che vedete voi?
SOF. Non vedete voi questo che mi tira?

Cha

Ah! whither wilt thou snatch me? Be not rude;
I know my fate, and, willing, follow thee.
ERM. O boundless sorrow! grief ineffable!
SOPH. Why weep ye? Know ye not that all of earth,
When born to life, are destined heirs of death?
CHOR. Ah yes! but thou art all untimely snatch'd
From life, and hast not reach'd thy twentieth year.
SOPH. A welcome boon never too soon arrives.
ERM. Sad boon, that whelms us all in utter woe.
SOPH. Sister, approach, support me; for my brain
Is dizzy, and night gathers o'er my eyes.
ERM. Recline upon my bosom, sister dear!
SOPH. Sweet son! few moments, and thou hast no more
A mother. May the gods watch over thee!
ERM. Ah! me! what direful words are these I hear
Thee utter?—Stay, ah! stay!—leave us not yet.
SOPH. Vain wish! death drags me on the darksome way.
ERM. Ah! yet look up! thy babe would kiss thy lips.
CHOR. A single look.
SOPH. Ah! me, I can no more.
CHOR. The gods receive thy soul!
SOPH. I die—farewell!

Trissino also wrote a comedy, after the ancient model, with all the personages of the pieces of Terence, and even with the chorus, which the Romans, in their improvements, had ex-

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Che fai? dove mi meni? Io so ben dove!
Lasciami pur, ch' io me ne vengo teco.
ERM. O che pietate, o che dolore estremo!
SOF. A che piangete? Non sapete ancora
Che ciò che nasce, a morte si destina?
CORO. Aimè che questa è pur troppo per tempo
Ch' ancor non siete nel vigesim' anno.
SOF. Il ben, esser non può troppo tempo.
ERM. Che duro ben è quel che ci distrugge!
SOF. Accostatevi a me, voglio appoggiarmi,
Ch'io mi sento mancare; e già la notte
Tenebrosa ne vien ne gli occhi miei.
ERM. Appoggiatevi pur sopra 'l mio petto.
SOF. O figlio mio, tu non arai piu madre:
Ella già se ne và; statti con Dio.
ERM. Oimè, che cosa dolorosa ascolto!
Non ci lasciate ancor, non ci lasciate?
SOF. I non posso far altro, e sono in via.
ERM. Alzate il viso a questo che vi bascia.
CORO. Riguardatelo un poco.
SOF. Aimè, non posso.
CORO. Dio vi raccolga in pace.
SOF. Io vado. Addio.

cluded from the stage. It is called *I Simillimi;* the everlasting twins, which appear in all theatres. He also left a number of sonnets and *canzoni*, written in imitation of Petrarch, but little deserving of our notice.

A friend of Trissino, Giovanni Rucellai, laboured with not less zeal, and often with more taste, to render the modern Italian poetry entirely classical, and to introduce, into every class of it, a pure imitation of the ancients. Born at Florence, in 1475, and allied to the house of Medici, he was employed in affairs of state. After the elevation of Leo X. to the pontificate, he entered into orders, without, however, obtaining, either from him or from Clement VII., a cardinal's hat, to which honour he aspired. He died in 1525, at the castle of St. Angelo, of which he was governor.

His most celebrated production is a didactic poem on Bees, of about fifteen hundred lines, which receives a particular interest from the real fondness which Rucellai seems to have entertained for these creatures. There is something so sincere in his respect for their virgin purity, and in his admiration of the order of their government, that he inspires us with real interest for them. All his descriptions are full of life and truth.*

* The description, which Rucellai gives of the civil wars of the Bees, is extremely pleasing. He thus explains the readiest way of putting a stop to their battles:

Delay not, instant seize a full-leaved branch,
And through it pour a shower, in minute drops,
Of honey mingled, or the grape's rich juice.
Ere finished, you shall wondering behold
The furious warfare suddenly appeased;
And the two warring bands joyful unite,
And foe embracing foe; each with its lips
Licking the other's wings, feet, arms, and breast,
Wherein the luscious mixture hath been shed,
And all inebriate with delight. As when
The Switzers, in sedition, sudden seize
Their arms, and raise the war-cry; if a man
Of aspect grave, rising, with gentle voice
Reproving, mitigates their savage rage,
Then to them yields full vases of rich wine;
Each, in the foaming bowl, plunges his lips
And bearded chin; his fellow, with fond kiss,
Embraces, making sudden league or truce;
And, with the bounty of the grape o'erpower'd,
Drinking oblivion of their injuries.

Non

His poem is written in blank verse, but with great harmony and grace. The Bees themselves, who, it is said, dread the neighbourhood of an echo, forbade him the use of rhyme. He thus opens his poem:

> As bending o'er my lyre to sing your praise
> In lofty rhymes, chaste virgins, angels fair,
> That haunt the sparkling river's flowery marge.
> At the first dawn of day, a sudden sleep
> Surprised me, and in dreams I saw descend
> A choir of your fair race, and from their tongues,
> Yet redolent of honied sweets, these words
> I heard. O Friend, that honour'st thus our race,
> Shun, in thy dulcet verse, the barbarous rhyme;
> For well thou know'st that image of the voice
> Which babbles forth from Echo's airy cave,
> Was ever to our realm a hated foe.*

Non indugiar; piglia un frondoso ramo,
E prestamente sopra quelle spargi
Minutissima pioggia, ove si truovi
Il mele infuso, o 'l dolce umor de l'uva;
Che fatto questo, subito vedrai
Non sol quetarsi il cieco ardor de l' ira,
Ma insieme unirsi allegre ambe le parti,
E l' una abbracciar l' altra, e con le labbra
Leccarsi l' ale, i piè, le braccia, il petto,
Ove il dolce sapor sentono sparso,
E tutte inebbriarsi di dolcezza.
Come quando nei Suizzeri si muove
Sedizione, e che si grida a l' arme;
Se qualche uom grave allor si leva in piede
E comincia a parlar con dolce lingua,
Mitiga i petti barbari e feroci;
E intanto fa portare ondanti vasi
Pieni di dolci ed odorati vini;
Allora ognun le labbra e 'l mento immerge
Ne le spumanti tazze, ognun con riso
S'abbraccia e bacia, e fanno e pace e tregua
Inebbriati da l' umor de l' uva
Che fa obbliar tutti i passati oltraggi.

* Mentr' era per cantar i vostri doni
Con alte rime, o Verginette caste,
Vaghe angellette dell' erbose rive;
Preso dal sonno in sul spuntar dell' alba,
M' apparve un coro della vostra gente;
E dalla lingua, onde s' accoglie il mele,
Sciolsono in chiare voci queste parole:
O spirito amico . . . .

Fuggi

But it was as a tragic poet that Rucellai attempted to tread in the footsteps of his friend Trissino, although in this respect he appears to be much inferior to him. Two dramas of Rucellai remain, written in blank verse, with a chorus, and as much resembling the Grecian pieces in their distribution, as a learned Italian could make them, at an epoch when the study of antiquity was the first of sciences. One of these is entitled *Rosmonda*, and the other, *Orestes*. Rosmonda, the wife of Alboin, the first king of the Lombards, who, to avenge her father, destroyed her husband, was a new subject for the stage. Rucellai altered historical facts sufficiently happily, in order to connect events which a long space of time had in reality separated; to unite more intimately causes and effects; and to describe the former relation of his characters to each other. But *Rosmonda* is only the sketch of a tragedy. The situation is not marked by any developement; time is not given for the exhibition of the passions; nor are they at all communicated to the spectators. Conversations and long dialogues usurp the place which ought to be reserved for action; and the atrocity of the characters and events, which are rather related than shewn, forbids all sympathy. The other tragedy of Rucellai is an imitation of Euripides, and is called *Orestes*, although the subject is that known under the name of Iphigenia in Tauris. But the example of the Greek poet has not availed Rucellai. His piece is deficient in interest, in probability, and, above all, in action. The Italian dramatists of the sixteenth century, seem to have aimed at copying the defects rather than the beauties of the Greeks. If there chance to be, in the dramas of the Greeks, any unskilful exposition, or any recital of overwhelming tediousness, they never fail to take it for their model. It would almost appear to have been their intention that Sophocles and Euripides should be received with hisses; and they seem to wait, at the conclusion of the piece, to inform us that the part which has so wearied us is from the ancients. Euripides had the fault of multiplying moral precepts, and philosophical dissertations; but one of his maxims is only like the text to a

Fuggi le rime, e 'l rimbombar sonoro;
Tu sai pur che l' immagin de la voce,
Che risponde dai sassi ove Eco alberga,
Sempre nemica fù del nostro Reggio.

commentary in Rucellai. The chorus, which the ancient poet devoted to generalise the ideas and sentiments arising out of the action, became, in the hands of his Italian imitator, the depository of that trivial philosophy, to which sentiment is no less a stranger than poetry. The recognition of Orestes and Iphigenia is retarded and embarrassed to a degree of tediousness. No character is perfectly drawn; no situation is managed in a manner to render it touching; and the catastrophe, the circumstance of the flight of Iphigenia and the Greeks, has not only the defect of not having been premeditated and foreseen, but even excites our laughter, instead of engaging our sympathy; since Thoas, alarmed at the predictions of the prophetess, and placed under lock and key, with all his guard, suffers himself to be duped like the tutor of a comedy.

The early Italian drama comprises a considerable number of pieces. But the pedantry which gave them birth, deprived them, from their cradle, of all originality, and all real feeling. The action and the representation, of which the dramatic poet should never for an instant lose sight, are constantly neglected; and philosophy and erudition usurp the place of the emotion necessary to the scene. Alamanni, in his *Antigone*, possesses more truth and sensibility than Rucellai, in his *Orestes;* but he has rather translated than imitated Sophocles. Sperone Speroni d'Alvarotti wrote a tragedy on the subject of Canace. the daughter of Æolus, whom her father cruelly punished for an incestuous passion; but this is scarcely the outline of a tragedy, and nothing more than partial conversations on the most calamitous events. There is, perhaps, a greater degree of talent in the *Œdipus* of Giovanni Andrea dell' Anguillara, in the *Jocasta* and *Mariana* of Lodovico Dolce; and, above all, in the *Orbecche* of Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cintio, of Ferrara. This last piece, which was represented in the house of the author, in Ferrara, in 1541, excites and keeps alive our curiosity. In some scenes, it even awakes, in the minds of the spectators, alarm, terror, and pity. But Giraldi composed his tragedies from tales of his own invention, which possessed neither truth nor probability; and the *Arrenopia* is as absurd as the *Orbecche* is extravagant. The soliloquies are dull and frigid; we have dialogues, instead of action; and a chorus of pretended lyrics, which contain only common ideas

clothed in rhyme, destroys all sympathy as soon as it is heard.

The inferiority of the Italians to the Spaniards, in dramatic invention, is remarkable; and particularly at the epoch of their greatest literary glory. These pretended restorers of the theatre conformed, it is true, to all the precepts of Aristotle, from the time of the sixteenth century, and to the rules of classical poetry, even before their authority was proclaimed. But this avails little when they are wanting in life and interest. We cannot read these tragedies without insufferable fatigue; and it is difficult to form an idea of the patience of the spectators, condemned to listen to these long declamations and tedious dialogues, usurping the place of the action, which ought to be brought before their eyes. The Spanish comedies, on the contrary, although extravagant in their plots, and irregular in their execution, always excite our attention, curiosity, and interest. It is with regret that we suspend the perusal of them in the closet, and they are not less adapted for the stage, where the dramatic interest is throughout maintained, and the spectator is always interested in the events passing before him.

Even the names of the dramatic pieces of Italy, in the sixteenth century, are scarcely preserved in the records of literature. But posterity seems to have paid a greater respect to the memory of some of the lyric and pastoral poets. Many of these have retained great celebrity, even after their works have ceased to be read. Such, amongst others, was the case with Giacomo Sanazzaro, born at Naples on the twenty-eighth of July, 1458; who died, in the same city, at the end of the year 1530; and whose tomb, very near to that of Virgil, may almost be said to partake of its celebrity. Although he belonged to a distinguished family, he did not inherit any fortune; owing all that he enjoyed to the favour of the sovereigns of Naples. He was early remarkable for his proficiency in Greek and Roman literature; but his love for a lady of the name of Carmosina Bonifacia, the rest of whose history is wholly unknown, engaged him to write in Italian. He celebrated this lady in his *Arcadia*, and in his sonnets; and, when death deprived him of her, he renounced the Italian muses for Latin composition. From that time, he was devoted to religious observances, which had before held

little place in his thoughts. The kings of Naples of the house of Aragon, Ferdinand I., Alfonso II., and Frederic, loaded him with favours. The last of these princes presented him with the beautiful *Villa Mergolina*, where Sanazzaro delighted to realize his dreams of happiness, in an Arcadia of his own. But the wars between the French and the Spaniards, in the kingdom of Naples, overwhelmed him in common ruin with his benefactors. Faithful to the house of Aragon, he sold almost all his possessions, in order to remit the proceeds to Frederic, when the dethroned king was sent as a hostage to France. Sanazzaro followed him thither, and shared his exile, from 1501 to 1505. He was destined to close the eyes of his royal benefactor; and expressed his attachment for him, and his regret for his misfortunes, with a warmth of patriotism and courage, which do honour to his character. His Mergolina, to which he had returned, was afterwards pillaged and wasted by the army of the prince of Orange, in the service of Charles V. He passed the latter years of his life in a village of the Somma, one of the heights of Vesuvius. A Marchioness Cassandra, to whom he was attached, resided there also, but at the distance of a mile; and Sanazzaro, a septuagenarian, never passed a day without visiting her. He died at the end of the year 1530, aged seventy-two.

The *Arcadia* of Sanazzaro, on which his reputation principally depends, was begun by him in his early youth, and published in 1504, when he was forty-six years of age. A species of romantic pastoral, in prose and without action, serves to connect twelve romantic and pastoral scenes, and twelve eclogues of shepherds in Arcadia. Each part commences with a short recital in elegant prose, and ends with an eclogue in verse. In the seventh, Sanazzaro himself appears in Arcadia; he recounts the exploits of his family, the honours they obtained at Naples, and how love had driven him into exile. Thus, the ancient Arcadia is, to Sanazzaro, nothing more than the poetical world of his own age. He awakes, in the twelfth eclogue, as from a dream. The plan of this piece may be subject to criticism, but the execution is elegant. Sanazzaro, inspired by a sentiment of tender passion, found, in his own mind, that reverie of enthusiasm that belongs to pastoral poetry. The sentiments, as in

all idyls, are sometimes trite and affected, though sometimes, also, breathing warmth and nature. The thoughts, the images, and the language, are always poetical, except that he has too frequently introduced Latin words, which were not then naturalized into the Tuscan dialect. The stanzas, with which each eclogue terminates, are generally under the lyric form of *canzoni*. The fifth, of which the three first stanzas are here translated, on the tomb of a young shepherd, may serve to compare the poetical feelings of the Italians, which are wholly derived from the imagination, with those of the North, in which the heart has the greater share.

Ergasto thus speaks, over the tomb of his deceased friend

O brief as bright, too early blest,
Pure spirit, freed from mortal care,
Safe in the far-off mansions of the sky,
There, with that angel take thy rest,
Thy star on earth; go, take thy guerdon there;
Together quaff th' immortal joys, on high,
Scorning our mortal destiny;
Display thy sainted beauty bright,
'Mid those that walk the starry spheres,
Through seasons of unchanging years;
By living fountains, and by fields of light,
Leading thy blessed flocks above;
And teach thy shepherds here to guard their care with love.

Thine, other hills, and other groves,
And streams, and rivers never dry,
On whose fresh banks thou pluck'st the amaranth flowers
While following other loves*

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* Alma beata e bella
Che, da legami sciolta,
Nuda salisti ne' superni chiostri,
Ove con la tua stella
Ti godi insieme accolta;
E lieta ivi, schernendo i pensier nostri.
Quasi un bel sol ti mostri
Trà li più chiari spirti;
E co i vestigi santi
Calchi le stelle erranti;
E trà pure fontane, e sacri mirti
Pasci celesti greggi,
E i tuoi cari pastori indi correggi.

Altri monti, altri piani,
Altri boschetti e rivi,
Vedi nel cielo, e più novelli fiori;

Through sunny glades, the Fauns glide by
Surprising the fond Nymphs in happier bowers.
Pressing the fragrant flowers,
Androgeo, there, sings in the summer shade,
By Daphnis' and by Melibœus' side,
Filling the vaulted heavens wide
With the sweet music made;
While the glad choirs that round appear,
Listen to his dear voice, we may no longer hear.

As to the elm is his embracing vine,
As their bold monarch to the herded kine,
As golden ears to the glad sunny plain,
Such wert thou to our shepherd youths, O swain!
Remorseless death! if thus thy flames consume
The best and loftiest of his race,
Who may escape his doom?
What shepherd ever more shall grace
The world like him, and with his magic strain
Call forth the joyous leaves upon the woods,
Or bid the wreathing boughs embower the summer floods?

There have been more than sixty editions of the *Arcadia*. At the present day, it is little read, as nothing is more opposite to the spirit of our age, than the characteristic insipidity of pastorals. Sanazzaro, besides his Latin poems, which are

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Altri Fauni e Silvani
Per luoghi dolci estivi,
Seguir le Ninfe in più felici amori;
Tal fra soavi odori
Dolce cantando all' ombra,
Trà Dafni e Melibeo,
Siede il nostro Androgeo,
E di rara dolcezza il cielo ingombra;
Temprando gli elcmenti
Col suon de' nuovi inusitati accenti.

Quale la vite all' olmo,
Ed agli armenti il toro,
E l' ondeggianti biade a' lieti campi;
Tale la gloria e 'l colmo
Fostù del nostro coro.
Ahi cruda morte! e chi fia che ne scampi,
Se con tue fiamme avvampi
Le più elevate cime?
Chi vedrà mai nel mondo
Pastor tanto giocondo,
Che, cantando fra noi si dolci rime,
Sparga il bosco di fronde,
E di bei rami induca ombra sù l'onde?

highly celebrated, and which he published under his academical name of Actius Syncerus, wrote many sonnets and *canzoni*. In order to afford, to those who do not read Italian, a specimen of the thoughts and imagination of a celebrated poet, whose name is often repeated, and whose works are little read, a translation of one of his sonnets, which he puts into the mouth of his deceased mistress, to whom he had been tenderly attached, is here given.

Beloved, well thou know'st how many a year
I dwelt with thee on earth, in blissful love;
Now am I call'd to walk the realms above,
And vain to me the world's cold shows appear.
Enthroned in bliss, I know no mortal fear,
And in my death with no sharp pangs I strove,
Save when I thought that thou wert left to prove
A joyless fate, and shed the bitter tear
But round thee plays a ray of heavenly light,
And ah! I hope, that ray shall lend its aid
To guide thee through the dark abyss of night.
Weep then no more, nor be thy heart dismay'd;
When close thy mortal days, in fond delight
My soul shall meet thee, in new love array'd.*

A new description of poetry arose in Italy, under Francesco Berni, which has retained the name of the inventor. The Italians always attach the appellation of *bernesque* to that light and elegant mockery, of which he set the example, and which pervades all his writings. The gaiety with which he recounts serious events, without rendering them vulgar is not confounded by his countrymen with the burlesque, to which it is so nearly allied. It is, above all, in the *Orlando Inna-*

* Vissa teco son io molti e molt' anni,
Con quale amor, tu 'l sai, fido consorte;
Poi recise il mio fil la giusta morte,
E mi sottrasse alli mondani inganni.

Se lieta io goda ne i beati scanni,
Ti giuro che 'l morir non mi fu forte,
Se non pensando alla tua cruda sorte,
E che sol ti lasciava in tanti affanni.

Ma la virtù che 'n te dal ciel riluce,
Al passar questo abisso oscuro e cieco
Spero che ti sarà maestra e duce.

Non pianger più: ch' io sarò sempre teco;
E bella e viva al fin della tua luce
Venir vedrai me. e rimenarten meco

morato of the Count Boiardo, remodelled by Berni in a free and lively style, that we perceive the fulness of his genius. His other works, imbued, perhaps, with more comic wit, trespass too frequently on the bounds of propriety. Francesco Berni was born about 1490, at Lamporecchio, a castle between Florence and Pistoia. We know little more of his biography than what he relates himself, in a jesting tone, in the sixty-seventh canto of his *Orlando Innamorato*. He was of a noble, but not opulent family. At nineteen years of age, he went to Rome, full of confidence in the protection of Cardinal Dovizio da Bibbiena, who, in fact, took little interest in his welfare. After the death of that prelate, being always embarrassed, he entered as secretary into the Apostolic Datary.* He there found the means of life, but was oppressed by an irksome employ, to which he was never reconciled. His labours increased, in proportion as he gave less satisfaction. He carried under his arms in his bosom, and in his pockets, whole packets of letters, to which he never found

* A few stanzas have been selected, as displaying at the same time the style and the personal character of Berni. The author supposes that the pleasant Florentine companion, by whom he means to represent himself, meets the cavaliers in the castle of Mirth, in which Argant, the magician, wishes to retain Rugiero.

Credeva il pover' uom di saper fare
Quello esercizio, e non ne sapea straccio;
Il padron non potè mai contentare,
E pur non uscì mai di quello impaccio;
Quanto peggio facea, più avea da fare;
Aveva sempre in seno e sotto il braccio
Dietro e innanzi, di lettere un fastello,
E scriveva, e stillavasi il cervello.

Quivi anche, o fusse la disgrazia, o 'l poco
Merito suo, non ebbe troppo bene:
Certi beneficioli aveva loco
Nel paesel, che gli eran brighe e pene:
Or la tempesta, or l'acqua, ed or il foco
Or il diavol l' entrate gli ritiene;
E certe magre pensioni aveva
Onde mai un quattrin non riscoteva.

. . . . .

Era forte collerico e sdegnoso,
Della lingua e del cor libero e sciolto;
Non era avaro, non ambizioso,
Era fedele ed amorevol molto:

Degli

time to reply. His revenues were small, and when he came to collect them, he frequently found, according to his own expressions, that storms, water, fire, or the devil, had swept them entirely away. His mirth, and the verses and tales which he recited, made him an acceptable member of society; but, whatever love he might have had for liberty, he remained always in a state of dependance. By his satires he made himself many enemies, the most vindictive of whom was Pietro Aretino, whom he, in turn, did not spare. Berni, who informs us that his greatest pleasure was lying in bed and doing nothing, experienced, if we are to believe common rumour, a death more tragic than we should have been led to expect from his situation in life. He was the common friend of the Cardinal Ippolito and the Duke Alessandro de' Medici, who were cousins-german, and was solicited by the latter of these to poison his relation. As he refused to participate in so black a crime, he was himself poisoned a few days afterwards, in the

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Degli amici amator miracoloso,
Così anche chi in odio avea tolto
Odiava a guerra finita e mortale;
Ma più pronto er' a amar ch' a voler male.

Di persona era grande, magro e schietto,
Lunghe e sottil le gambe forte aveva,
E 'l naso grande, e 'l viso largo, e stretto
Lo spazio che le ciglia divideva:
Concavo l' occhio avea azzurro e netto,
La barba folta, quasi il nascondeva
Se l'avesse portata, ma il padrone
Aveva con le barbe aspra questione.

Nessun di servitù giammai si dolse
Nè più ne fù nimico di costui,
E pure a consumarlo il diavol tolse,
Sempre il tenne fortuna in forza altrui:
Sempre che comandargli il padron volse,
Di non servirlo venne voglia a lui,
Voleva far da se, non comandato,
Com' un gli comandava era spacciato.

Cacce, musiche, feste, suoni e balli,
Giochi, nessuna sorte di piacere
Troppo il movca, piacevangli i cavalli
Assai, ma si pasceva del vedere,
Che modo non avea da comperalli;
Onde il suo sommo bene era in giacere
Nudo, lungo, disteso, e 'l suo diletto
Era non far mai nulla, e starsi in letto.

year 1536. In the same year, the Cardinal Ippolito was, in fact, poisoned by his cousin.

Berni had diligently studied the ancients, and wrote himself elegant Latin verse. He had purified his taste, and accustomed himself to correction. His style possesses so much nature and comic truth, that we can easily imagine the enthusiasm with which it is to this day adopted as a model. But, under his hand, every thing was transformed into ridicule. His satire was almost always personal; and when he wished to excite laughter, he was not to be restrained by any respect for morals or for decency. His *Orlando Innamorato* is ranked, by the Italians, among their classical poems. Berni, even more than Ariosto, treats chivalry with a degree of mockery. He has not, indeed, travestied the tale of Boiardo. It is the same tale sincerely narrated, but by a man who cannot resist indulging in laughter at the absurd suggestions of his own genius. The versification is carefully formed; wit is thrown out with a lavish hand; and the gaiety is more sportive than that of Ariosto; but the two poems will not bear a comparison in respect to imagination, colouring, richness, and real poetry. The other works of Berni are satirical sonnets, and *Capitoli*, in *terza rima*, among which the eulogy on the Plague, and that on Aristotle, are conspicuous. They were prohibited, and, indeed, not without very good reason.

Few men were more admired and obtained a greater share of fame, in the sixteenth century, than Pietro Bembo, who was born, at Venice, of an illustrious family, on the twenty-sixth of May, 1470. Connected in friendship with all the men of letters and first poets of his age, he was a lover of the celebrated Lucretia Borgia, daughter of Alexander VI., and wife of Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara; and was a favourite with the Popes Leo X. and Clement VII., who loaded him with honours, pensions, and benefices. He enjoyed, from the year 1529, the title of Historiographer to the Republic of Venice; and Paul III. finally created him a Cardinal in 1539. Wealth, fame, and the most honourable employs seemed to pursue him, and snatched him, in spite of himself, from a life of epicurean pleasure, which he did not renounce when he took the ecclesiastical habit. His death was occasioned by a fall from his horse, on the eighteenth day of January, 1547, in his seventy-seventh year. He was the admiration of his own age, which

placed him in the first rank of classic authors. His fame, however, has since materially declined. Bembo, who had professedly studied the Latin and the Tuscan languages, and composed, in both, with the utmost purity and elegance, was, all his life, too exclusively occupied with words to support the brilliancy of his fame, after the Latin was no longer cultivated with ardour, and custom had introduced many alterations in the Tuscan. The style of Bembo, which was highly extolled in his lifetime, appears, at the present day, affected and greatly laboured. We are aware of his imitations in every line, and seek in vain for an expression of genuine sentiment. Neither is he distinguished by depth of thought, or by vivacity of imagination. He has aspired to rank himself with Cicero in Latin prose, and with Petrarch and Boccaccio in Italian poetry and prose ; but, however great the resemblance may be, we instinctively distinguish the original from the copy, and the voluminous writings of Bembo now find few readers. His History of Venice, in twelve books, his letters, and his dialogues, in the Italian language, are among the best of his prose works. His *Canzoniere* may bear a comparison with that of Petrarch. His conversations on love, which he entitled *Asolani*, and which are interspersed with poetry, approach to the style of the tales of Boccaccio. The singular purity of style, on which he prides himself, and which his contemporaries acknowledged, has not, on all occasions, preserved him from *concetti* and affectation.* Occasionally, however, we

* We may instance the following verses of Perottino, in the *Asolani*, B. i. p. 12.

Quand' io penso al martire,
Amor, che tu mi dai gravoso e forte,
Corro per girne a morte,
Così sperando i miei danni finire.

Ma poi ch' io giungo al passo
Ch' è porto in questo mar d' ogni tormento,
Tanto piacer ne sento
Che l' alma si rinforza ed io non passo.

Così il viver m' ancide,
Così la morte mi ritorna in vita ;
O miseria infinita
Che l' uno apporta e l' altro non recide.

In another canzone, he bewails himself, as a victim to the two extremes of torture, in the flames of love which scorch him and in

find in him not only imagination, but real sensibility.* His Latin poems are in high esteem, and he was sufficiently master of the modern tongues to have also attempted Castilian verse.†

The same age gave the name of *Unico* to Bernardo Accolti, of Arezzo, born before 1466, and who died after the year 1534. Whenever this celebrated poet announced his intention of reciting his verses, the shops were shut up, and the people flocked in crowds to hear him. He was surrounded by prelates of the first eminence ; a body of Swiss troops accompanied him ; and the court was lighted by torches. But, as Mr. Roscoe has justly remarked, there wanted but one circumstance to crown his glory—that his

the tears which inundate him; and he thus affectedly concludes the piece :

Chi vidde mai tal sorte,
Tenersi in vita un uom, con doppia morte.

* The following stanza, from a canzone of Bembo, may, it appears to me, be pointed out as comprising this two-fold merit. *Asolani*, B. i. p. 21.

Qualor due fiere, in solitaria piaggia,
Girsen pascendo semplicette e snelle,
Per l' erba verde, scorgo di lontano,
Piangendo lor comincio : O lieta e saggia
Vita d' amanti, a voi nemiche stelle
Non fan vostro sperar fallace e vano.
Un bosco, un monte, un piano,
Un piacer, un desio, sempre vi tene.
Io de la donna mia quanto son lunge?
Deh ! se pietà vi punge,
Date udienza inseme a le mie pene,
E 'ntanto mi riscuoto, e veggio, espresso
Che per cercar altrui, perdo me stesso.

† About the same time the example of the Italians produced a change in Spanish poetry. But Bembo, in his Castilian verses, of which he has left a considerable number, retained the old national rhythm, as, for instance, in the following *Villancico :*

O muerte que sueles ser
De todos mal recebida,
Agora puedes volver
Mil angustias en plazer
Con tu penosa venida.
Y puesto que tu herida
A sutil muerte condena,
No es dolor tan sen medida
El que da fin a la vida
Como el que la tiene en pena.

works had perished with himself. Their style is hard and poor; his images are forced, and his taste is perverted by affectation. He has left us a comedy, *La Virginia;* some octaves and *terza rima;* some lyric poetry; and some *strambotti*, or epigrams.

It is not by the side of these evanescent poets that we must rank the illustrious secretary of the Florentine republic, the great Nicolo Machiavelli, whose name is in no danger of being buried in oblivion. This celebrity is his due, as a man of profound thought, and as the most eloquent historian, and most skilful politician that Italy has produced. But a distinction less enviable, has attached his name to the infamous principles which he developed, though probably with good intentions, in his treatise, entitled *Il Principe;* and his name is, at the present day, allied to every thing false and perfidious in politics.

Machiavelli was born at Florence, on the third of May, 1469, of a family which had enjoyed the first offices in the Republic. We are not acquainted with the history of his youth; but, at the age of thirty, he entered into public business, as chancellor of the state, and from that time he was constantly employed in public affairs, and particularly in embassies. He was sent four times, by the Republic, to the court of France; twice to the Imperial court; and twice to that of Rome. Among his embassies to the smaller princes of Italy, the one of the longest duration was to Cæsar Borgia, whom he narrowly observed at the very important period when this illustrious villain was elevating himself by his crimes, and whose diabolical policy he had thus an opportunity of studying at leisure. In the midst of these grave occupations, his satiric gaiety did not forsake him; and it was at this period that he composed his comedies, his novel of *Belfagor*, and some stanzas and sonnets which are not deficient in poetical merit. He had a considerable share in directing the councils of the Republic, as to arming and forming its militia; and he assumed more pride to himself from this advice, which liberated the state from the yoke of the *Condottieri*, than from the fame of his literary works. The influence to which he owed his elevation in the Florentine Republic, was that of the free party which contested the power of the Medici, and at that time held them in exile.

When the latter were recalled in 1512, Machiavelli was deprived of all his employs and banished. He then entered into a conspiracy against the usurpers, which was discovered, and he was put to the torture, but without wresting from him, by extreme agonies, any confession which could impeach either himself or those who had confided in his honour. Leo X., on his elevation to the pontificate, restored him to liberty. Machiavelli has not, in any of his writings, testified his resentment of the cruel treatment he experienced. He seems to have concealed it at the bottom of his heart; but we easily perceive that torture had not increased his love of princes, and that he took a pleasure in painting them as he had seen them, in a work in which he feigned to instruct them. It was, in fact, after having lost his employs, that he wrote on history and politics, with that profound knowledge of the human heart which he had acquired in public life, and with the habit of unweaving, in all its intricacies, the political perfidies which then prevailed in Italy. He dedicated his treatise of the *Principe*, not to Lorenzo the Magnificent, as Boutterwek, by a strange anachronism, has stated, but to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, the proud usurper of the liberties of Florence, and of the estates of his benefactor, the former Duke of Urbino, of the house of Rovere. Lorenzo thought himself profound when he was crafty, and energetic when he was cruel; and Machiavelli, in shewing, in his treatise of the *Principe*, how an able usurper, who is not restrained by any moral principle, may consolidate his power, gave to the duke instructions conformable to his taste. The true object, however, of Machiavelli could not be to secure on his throne a tyrant whom he hated, and against whom he had conspired. Nor is it probable that he only proposed to himself, to expose to the people the maxims of tyranny, in order to render them odious; for an universal experience had, at that time, made them known throughout all Italy, and that diabolical policy, which Machiavelli reduced to a system, was, in the sixteenth century, that of all the states. There is, in his manner of treating the subject, a general feeling of bitterness against mankind, and a contempt of the human race, which induces him to address it in language adapted to its despicable and depraved condition. He applies himself to the interests, and selfish calculations of

mankind, since they do not deserve an appeal to their enthusiasm and moral sense. He establishes principles in theory, which he knows his readers will reduce to practice; and he exhibits the play of the human passions with an energy and clearness which require no ornament.

The *Principe* of Machiavelli is the best known of his political works, but it is neither the most profound, nor the most considerable. His three books of discourses on the first Decade of Livy, in which he investigates the first causes of the power of the Romans, and the obstacles which have impeded other nations in a similar career, discover an extensive knowledge, a great perspicacity in judging of men, and a powerful talent of mind in abstracting and generalizing ideas. The most profound political observations, which have been written since this epoch, in any language, have been derived from these early meditations of Machiavelli. As in this work he goes much more directly to his object, and as he did not write either for a tyrant or for a free people, but for every honest mind which loves to reflect on the destinies of nations, this book is, in consequence, more moral in principle, though containing lessons not less profound; nor has it incurred, on the part of the church or of society, the same anathema which some time after the death of Machiavelli was pronounced against his treatise of the *Principe*.

It was also at this period of his life that Machiavelli wrote his History of Florence, dedicated to Pope Clement VII., and in which he instructed the Italians in the art of uniting the eloquence of history with depth of reflection. He has attached himself, much less than his predecessors in the same line, to the narration of military events. But his work, as a history of popular passions and tumults, is a masterpiece, and Machiavelli has completed, by this noble example of his theories, his analysis of the human heart. He was again employed in public affairs by the Pope, to whom he dedicated his book, and was charged with the direction of the fortifications, when death deprived his country of his farther services, on the twenty-second day of June, 1527, three years before the termination of the Florentine Republic.

Machiavelli might have rendered himself illustrious as a comic writer, if he had not preferred political fame. He has left three comedies, which by the novelty of the plot, by the

strength and vivacity of the dialogues, and by their admirable delineation of character, are far superior to all that Italy had then, or has, perhaps, since produced. We feel sensible, in perusing them, of the talent of the master who conceived them, of the elevation from which their author judges the beings whom he has depicted with so much truth, and of his profound contempt for all the duplicity and hypocrisy which he so faithfully exposes. Two monks in particular, a brother Timoteo, who appears in the two first, and a brother Alberico, protagonist of the third, are represented with a vivacity and accuracy which have left nothing to the invention of the author of the *Tartufe*. It is to be regretted, that public manners authorized, at that time, such an extreme license in theatrical representations, that it is impossible to give even an analysis of these comedies. His tale of *Belfagor*, or the devil, who takes refuge in hell to avoid a scold, has been translated into all languages, and remodelled in French by La Fontaine. His poems are more remarkable for vigour of thought, than for harmony of style, or grace of expression. Some are composed of historical facts versified, and others, of satirical or burlesque fragments. But the pleasantries of the author are generally mingled with gall, and when he indulges his humour, it is always in derision of the human race. It was thus that he wrote the Carnival Songs, to be recited by different troops of masks ; each dance having a song or an ode, appropriated to its character and to its disguise. In the streets of Florence there were successively seen, on the triumphant cars, despairing lovers, ladies, the spirits of the blest, hermits, fruit-sellers, and quacks. They were connected by a kind of dramatic action, but Machiavelli contrived that they should be preceded by a chorus of demons ; and we seem to recognize the writer of the *Principe* in the morose manner in which he introduces this annual and popular feast. The following are the opening stanzas :

Driven from the mansions of immortal bliss,
Angels no more, the fate
Of pride was ours.
Yet claim we here, in this*

* Già fummo, or non siam più, spirti beati,
Per la superbia nostra

Dall'

Your rude and ravaged state,
More torn with faction and fierce powers
Of vengeance than our realms of hate,
The rule we lost in Heaven, o'er man below.
Famine, war, blood, fierce cold, and fiercer fire,
Lo! on your mortal heads,
The vials pour our hands that never tire:
And we, while the glad season spreads
The feast and dance, are with you now,
And must with you remain,
To foster grief and pain,
And plague you with fresh woes, and crimes that bring forth woe.

Some similitude may, perhaps, be remarked between Machiavelli and a man of this time, Pietro Aretino, whose name has acquired an infamous celebrity. Those who are not acquainted with the works of either the one or the other, regard them both with equal horror; the first, as the abettor of political crime, and the other, as having made a boast of his impiety, immorality, and profligacy. A comparison, however, cannot be admitted between them. Aretino was a man of infamous character; Machiavelli was, at the worst, only a culpable writer. Such, however, was the power of wit, and the favour shown to poets, in the sixteenth century, that Charles V., Francis I., and the greatest men of the age, loaded Aretino with honours, and admitted him to their intimacy. An acknowledged friend of Leo X. and Clement VII., he was recommended to Paul III. by his son, the Duke of Parma, as deserving a cardinal's hat, and had nearly attained that distinction, on the death of Paul, from his successor Julius III. He composed, during a considerably long life, (1492 to 1557) a great number of works, which are scarcely read at the present day. Some of these owed their

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Dall' alto e sommo ciel tutti scacciati;
E 'n questa terra vostra
Abbiam preso 'l governo,
Perche quì si dimostra
Confusione e duol più che 'n inferno.
E fame e guerra, e sangue e ghiaccio e foco
Sopra ciascun mortale
Abbiam messo nel mondo a poco a poco;
E in questo carnovale
Vegniamo a star con voi,
Perche di ciascun male
Stati siamo e sarem principio noi.

reputation to their extreme licentiousness; others, to the caustic satire with which he attacked his powerful enemies; many, which were purchased at an extraordinary price by reigning sovereigns, are filled with the most base and degrading flatteries; and others, in no small number, are devotional pieces, which the author, an enemy to every religious faith and to all morals, wrote only because they brought him a larger sum of money. Notwithstanding this profligacy of mind and heart, Aretino received from his contemporaries the epithet of *Il Divino*. Possessed of assurance of every description, he adopted this title himself, repeated it on all occasions, and attached it to his signature as a person attaches a title to his name, or takes an addition to his arms. His life was sullied by every species of vice. His enemies, who found they could not wound the honour of a man who professed to have none, were obliged to have recourse to personal chastisement, which, in consequence, he frequently underwent. At other times, he drew on himself more serious attacks. At Rome, a Bolognese gentleman struck him with his poniard, and lamed him for life. Pietro Strozzi, a marshal of France, against whom he had written some satirical pieces, threatened to have him assassinated in his bed; and the unfortunate Aretino shut himself up in his house, in inexpressible terror, and thus led a prisoner's life, until Strozzi had quitted Italy. Tintoretto, whom he had attacked with his accustomed virulence, accidentally meeting him near his house, and feigning ignorance of what he had written, told him that he had long wished for an opportunity of painting his portrait. He led him into his house, placed him on a chair, and suddenly presenting a pistol, advanced against him in a menacing attitude. "How now, Giacomo!" cried the terrified poet. "I am only taking your measure," gravely answered the painter; and added, in the same tone, "I find you just four and a half pistol lengths." He then bade him instantly depart, an injunction which Aretino lost no time in obeying. It seemed, indeed, probable that he would have died either by the dagger or bodily chastisement, but he was reserved for a lighter death. He had some sisters at Venice, whose lives were as dissolute as his own. A person was one day recounting to him some of their amours, and he found them so comic, that he threw himself back with violence in

his chair. The chair fell backwards, his head was struck against the marble floor, and he died instantaneously, at the age of sixty-five.

The dramatic pieces of Aretino are the only works of his which can be said to have contributed to the advancement of letters in Italy; and it must be allowed that they are sometimes singularly attractive. In spite of all the disgust which the character of the author inspires; in spite of the effrontery with which, even in these comedies, he by turns sets himself above all the laws of decency in speaking of others, and those of modesty in speaking of himself; in spite of the gross faults in the conduct, and, almost always, of the want of interest in his characters, of perspicuity in the plot, and life in the action; we still find in his comedies a genuine dramatic talent, an originality, and often a gaiety, rarely met with in the early dramatic writers of Italy. Aretino probably owed his merit in great part to the absence of all imitation. He had neither the Greek nor Latin models before his eyes; he depicted human nature merely as he saw it, with all its vices and all its deformity, in a corrupted age; and, inasmuch as, like Aristophanes, he confined himself to the manners of his own time, he bears a greater resemblance to the Athenian dramatist than they who have taken him for their immediate model. In his comedies, Aretino makes continual allusions to local circumstances; he paints undisguisedly the vices of the great as well as those of the people; and, at the same time that he mingles his satires with the lowest flattery, in order to procure for himself the protection of the great, or to remunerate them for the money he had obtained from them, he always preserves the picture of the general dissoluteness of manners, and the loose principles of the age, with singular truth and vivacity of colouring. From no other source can we obtain a more correct insight into that abandonment of all morals, honour, and virtue, which marked the sixteenth century. This age, so resplendent in literary glory, prepared at the same time the corruption of taste and of genius, of sentiment and of imagination, in destroying all that Italy had hitherto preserved of her ancient laws.

As we are compelled to pass over many illustrious authors, lest we should fatigue the reader by a barren enumeration of names, we shall conclude this list by a short notice of Teofilo

Folengi, better known by the name of Merlino Coccajo. He was the inventor of the macaronic poetry, a species not less below the burlesque, than the *Bernesque* is above it. It is difficult to say whether these poems are Italian or Latin. The words and phrases are chosen from the most vulgar of the low Italian dialects; but the terminations are Latin, as is also the measure of the verse; and the wit consists in lending to a composition and to ideas already burlesque, the language and the blunders of an ignorant scholar. This ridiculous style, supported by great vivacity, but often by pleasantries of very bad taste, had a prodigious success. Merlino Coccajo had many imitators; and macaronic verses have been written, formed of Latin and French, as his partook of Latin and Italian. The induction of the physician, in the *Malade Imaginaire*, is in this macaronic language. Folengi was born in the state of Mantua, and was a Benedictine monk, but escaped from his convent to follow his mistress. After a lapse of eleven years, spent in an irregular life, Folengi returned to his convent in 1526, and sought pardon for his errors in the composition of religious poems; in one of which, amongst others, in octave verse, on the life of Christ, we find considerable strength and elegance. There are also beauties in some passages of his macaronic verses, but it requires no small degree of courage to look for them.

We shall not speak at length of Baldassare Castiglione, the celebrated author of the *Cortegiano*, who exhibits in his verses both grace and sensibility; of Francesca Maria Molza of Modena, whose whole life was consecrated to love and the Muses, (1487—1544), and whom many critics have placed in the first rank of the lyric poets of the age; of Giovanni Mauro, a burlesque poet, a friend and imitator of Berni; nor of Nicolo Franco, who, after having been brought up in the school of Aretino, had a furious quarrel with him, but attacked at the same time, with not less effrontery than his rival, both the government and public morals, in such a manner that Pius V., to put an effectual stop to his pasquinades, caused him to be hanged in 1569. Nor shall we pause to notice the Latin poets of this period. Sadoleti, Fracastoro, Pontano, and Vida, all of whom, by the purity of their language, by the elegance of their taste, and often by their classic genius, have approached the authors of antiquity whom they had

taken for models. The greater part of these have written poems on didactic subjects. This kind of composition appears, in fact, to suit better than any other with authors who submitted their genius to prescribed rules, and who, wishing to restore a nation and a literature which would not harmonize with their own age and manners, have in their poems studied more the form than the substance. Nor shall we further speak of several distinguished historians of this epoch, Giovio, Nardi, and Nerli; nor of a man more celebrated and universally read, Francesco Guicciardini, whose history is quoted, even at the present day, as a school of politics, and a model of judicious criticism. In works of this nature, the literary merit, that of expression, is only secondary. It is from their profoundness of thought, and their vivacity, that we assign a rank to historians; and, in order to pass an opinion on Guicciardini, we should be obliged to go beyond the bounds which we have prescribed to ourselves, on a subject already too extensive in itself.

We shall conclude this review of Italian literature of the sixteenth century, by some remarks on the progress of the comic drama. This branch of the dramatic art, which arose at the beginning of the age, if it was not brought to perfection, had at least rapidly advanced. The first pieces were little more than pedantic copies of the Latin comedy. They were represented at the expense of the Courts, before learned audiences. But at the end of a little time, although we do not know the precise period, troops of mercenary comedians possessed themselves of these dramas, and recited them before the public, who paid for their seats. From that time, the taste of the public became a matter of greater importance to the actors and to the authors. It was no longer sufficient that a piece was made conformable to the rules which the critics pretended to have deduced from the ancients. It was also requisite that it should interest or amuse. Machiavelli and Pietro Aretino had shown how laughter might be excited by the delineation of modern manners and vices. The example of Terence was gradually neglected, and a crowd of authors undertook, with less erudition, indeed, but with more vivacity, to entertain the public. The most remarkable amongst them was Anton Maria Grassini, of Florence, surnamed Il Lasca, (the name of a fish), who endeavoured to

give to his native drama manners and rules entirely national, and who overwhelmed with ridicule both the pedants and the Petrarchists. He ridiculed, in the first, the hard and starched imitation of the ancients; in the second, their Platonic love, the devotion to their mistresses, and the tender mysticism which rendered all their lyric poetry equally insipid and affected. A great number of comic authors followed in the footsteps of Lasca; Giovanni Battista Gelli, Angelo Firenzuola, Francesco Dambra, Salviati, Caro, and many others. Leontius Allacci, in his Dramaturgy, enumerates more than a thousand comedies composed in Italian in the sixteenth century; and Riccoboni assures us, that between the periods of 1500 and 1736, more than five thousand were printed. But amidst this prodigious number of writers, Italy does not boast a single great comic genius. If the early authors of this class were justly reproached with pedantry, those who followed were equally chargeable with ignorance and negligence. Content to draw laughter from the populace by their coarse and unpolished jests, they renounce the art of disposing and unravelling the plot, and of giving a true delineation of character.

These comedies, so numerous and so indifferent, almost all arose in the bosom of the academies, and were there represented. Italy was thronged in this age with literary societies, which took the title of Academies, and which assumed at the same time fanciful and absurd names. Among other exercises of the mind, the composition and recitation of comedies, with a view of restoring the drama of the ancients, was one of the earliest occupations of these literary societies. To this object their efforts were principally directed; and, as the performance of a comedy was at the same time amusing and profitable, there was scarcely a small town where an academy was not found, with the sole view of giving theatrical performances to the public. It is in this manner that we must explain that singular and rapid multiplication of academies, so remarkable in the history of Italy, and of which no one seems to have discovered the real object. Even to the present day, nearly all the theatres of Italy belong to academies. The title and academical privileges pass from father to son, and are sometimes sold. Since the academicians have given up performing themselves, they hire out their theatres

to strolling companies; and we are surprised to find a literary title given to an association devoted to pleasure and to profit.

Those wandering companies, who at the present day occupy the theatres of Italy, also took their rise in the sixteenth century, but in an obscure manner, and in a way which literature has not traced. This arose from the mountebanks and empirics attempting to represent, on their stages, farces of a greater length; and what was at first only an extempore dialogue between a quack and his fellow, assumed, by degrees, the form of a comedy. The pieces were not written before-hand, but a certain character was assigned to each actor, as well as his country, and a provincial dialect. It was this which gave rise to the invention of the masks of Pantaloon, the Doctor, and Harlequin and Columbine, who, always preserving the same characters, found them more easy to support. We shall again refer to these extempore comedies, which were called *Comedie dell' Arte*, and to the masks peculiar to the Italian theatre, when we arrive at the period when they exercised a greater influence on the national taste. Their first appearance in the literary world is marked by farces in the Paduan dialect, which Angelo Beolco Ruzzante, of Padua, published in 1530.* It is proper to notice, at least by a single word, the commencement of the existence of Pantaloon and Harlequin, to whom three succeeding centuries have been indebted for a fund of inexhaustible buffoonery.

* It may gratify the curiosity of the reader to present him with a specimen of these old harlequinades, in their original dialect, which is exceedingly grotesque. *Il Tascho, Atto* 1.

Siton. An frello stetu chi?

Daldura. Se a stesse ehi, critu que andera via con a vago?

Sit. No, a digo, se ti e chi, via?

Dald. A no son za oltra 'l mare, siando chi.

Sit. Favella un puo con mi.

Dald. Ste vuo que a favella mi, tasi ti.

Sit. Haristu vezu un certo huomo, rizzo, griso, con una mala ciera, el nazo rebeccò in sù, con le mascelle grande, color fumegaizzo, barba chiara, e guardaura scura?

Dald. E lo me stò apiccò questu? al pora sier vezu su una forca.

Sit. El la mierita ben.

Dald. El no passerae de chi via, que 'l no ghe va per sta via, nom: shi se và a insantare a Roma.

Sit. A ponto là se spazia la so mercandaria.

Dald. Que elo mercadante da perdoni, o da giubilei questu?

Sit. A dighe de femene, e si ne mena via una.—&c.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE DECLINE OF ITALIAN LITERATURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY; THE AGE OF THE SEICENTISTI.*

It is sometimes found that events, which overthrow the fortunes of whole nations, are more rapid in their career than the lives of individuals, and that a whole people may be deprived of their energy, their glory, and all that constituted their character, while the nobler principles, which they have forfeited, still continue to animate the breasts of many of the citizens. They, in whom the seeds of genius and talent, fostered by favourable circumstances, have early sprung up, will not be easily deterred from their cultivation, even by public calamities, which deprive their country of its independence, and extinguish the spirit of the people. Indeed, men have often attained to a high degree of literary eminence, at a period when the downfall of political institutions seemed to discourage the noblest views, and to repress the efforts of the human mind. Thus, notwithstanding the fatal revolutions which ushered in the close of the fifteenth century, the succeeding age was distinguished by a greater number of celebrated characters, in Italy, than, perhaps, had ever appeared in any other nation during an equal period of time. Had the calamities of that country ceased, and could Italy, after a war of half a century, have been restored to the situation which she held towards the close of the year fifteen hundred, these great characters would have maintained that national excellence, in all the fine arts and in every species of intellectual pursuits, which had been handed down to them by their illustrious predecessors. Italy might again have arisen, with fresh vigour, from the grave of her renown, and we should not have witnessed the blank, which we discover, in the annals of the human mind. But the unfortunate events which occurred at the commencement of the sixteenth century, were hardly so fatal to the progress of letters as the death-like repose which followed. An universal and organized system of oppression

* The seventeenth century is called by the Italians *Mille Seicento*, or *Seicento;* and the writers, who flourished during that period, are generally termed *Seicentisti.*

succeeded to the calamities of war; and enfeebled Italy produced, during a century and a half, only a race of cold and contemptible imitators, tamely following in the paths of their predecessors; or of false and affected originals, who mistook an inflated style for grandeur of sentiment, antithesis for eloquence, and witty conceits for a proof of brilliant powers. This was the reign of corrupted taste; a taste which strove, by a profusion of ornament, to disguise the want of native talent, and which maintained its authority from the time of the imprisonment of Tasso, until the appearance of Metastasio in the zenith of his fame.*

Although the reigns of Charles V. and of Philip II. appear among the most brilliant in history, for the triumphs of the human mind, in the career both of letters and of art, we must not forget that it was also the fatal period when chains were forged to subdue the intellect of mankind, and when genius, arrested in its course, was compelled to retrace its steps. These monarchs, who reaped the advantage of the munificent labours of their predecessors, failed to scatter, in their turn, the seeds of cultivation; and, as the harvest of the human mind requires half a century to bring it to perfection, every province subjected to their dominion was, after the expiration of that time, doomed to the general fate of sterility. It is almost impossible to convey an idea of the suspicious yet lethargic nature of the Spanish government under the three Philips, (Philip II., III., and IV.) over nearly one half of Italy; embracing the Milanese, Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia. It extended likewise, with scarcely less authority, over the territories of the Pope, and over the dukedoms of Italy, which had occasion to solicit its protection. Enormous duties, unequally and absurdly exacted, destroyed commerce, and exhausted and depopulated the country; while governors enriched themselves by cruel and overwhelming extortions, which excited an universal feeling of hatred and contempt, against the blind infatuation and injustice of such a system. The course of interminable war, in which the court of Madrid persisted during the whole period that the house of Austria wielded the sceptre of Spain, had drained the finest provinces of their wealth and population, and left them open to the

* From 1580 to 1730.

annual depredations of the Turks, to the invasion of the French, to the masked wars of the Piedmontese, and to the residence of German and Spanish troops, even more to be dreaded than the enemy. All free inquiry was considered in the light of an attack upon the government; while the liberty of the press was rigidly prohibited to its subjects, as well as the least discussion relating to public affairs. Nor were such coercive measures confined to the circulation of obnoxious writings. All persons accused of having prohibited books in their possession were subjected to the severest civil and religious penalties. In order to render this oppressive system still more effectual, and to extend its sway over the mind, the Inquisition was resorted to, as a final means of perpetuating the despotism already established. Not that this tribunal was instituted with a view to the interests of religion, or of permitting, at least to the clergy, some portion of the liberty of which the people were deprived; for at no time had greater persecution been experienced than by the priests who adhered to the Council of Trent, at the hands of the Viceroys of Naples, towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The policy pursued by the court of Madrid was, to introduce the doctrines of the Council into other states, in order to enfeeble and distract them; while, setting no bounds to its authority, it would never consent to recognize them in its own. Hence the perpetual inconsistency we every where observe between its professions and its conduct; and thus persecution was rendered still more intolerable, because its object was misunderstood, and its limits could never be foreseen. Abuses only seemed to be respected; civil liberty was openly invaded; and the popular rights in every point betrayed. Men, suspected of entertaining liberal views, no less than of overt actions, were subjected to cruel and atrocious punishments, which were inflicted rather out of torture and revenge, than in the course of justice and the laws, which were, indeed, no longer administered. Churches and monasteries served as a safe asylum for guilt; while the viceroys, governors of cities, and other agents of the government, took hired bandits into their service, remunerating their deeds of outrage and assassination, committed by their authority, with spoil and impunity. Even convents scrupled not to make use of the same weapons; and, in the conspiracy of the monk

Campanella, the people witnessed, not without astonishment, the priests of Calabria arming with their own hands many thousands of banditti,* who encamped in military order before the towns, so that it required a large escort to pass between Naples and Caserta, or Aversa. Such a state of anarchy, together with the universal hatred borne by the Italians towards the Spaniards, led to repeated efforts to free themselves from their yoke. The insurrections at Naples and at Messina in 1647, and the ensuing year, rescued nearly the whole of the Two Sicilies from the sway of Spain; nor were they again recovered, until recourse was had to treachery, where open force had failed. The Milanese, exposed to the continual passage of troops destined for the wars in France and Germany, did not dare openly to revolt; but the public discontent, and the fixed determination of the people to shake off the ignominious yoke, were the foundations of the power of the house of Savoy, which secretly aggrandized itself at the expense of the Austrian government.

The Republic of Genoa remained, during the whole of this age, in absolute subjection to the court of Spain. The Pope, whom the religious wars of Germany retained in the same interests and the same subjection, was punished for his rebellious conduct, whenever he attempted, as he had the temerity to do in a few instances, to lighten the weight of the burden imposed upon him by that grasping court. The Republic of Venice alone succeeded in preserving its liberty and neutrality, purchased at the price of the most scrupulous political silence and apathy. Nor did the Holy Inquisition more effectually repress all freedom of opinion in Spain, than the political inquisition, fearful of giving umbrage to its more powerful neighbours by any inconsiderate action of its citizens,

* Frà Tomaso Campanella was the author of many eccentric productions relating to philosophy and magic. He organized a conspiracy among the monks, with the authority of several bishops, for the purpose of establishing a republic in Calabria. Three hundred priests became a party to it, and fifteen hundred bandits were, in a short time, put under arms. The appearance of the Turkish fleet, commanded by Murat Reys, under whose auspices the new republic was placed, was fixed upon as the signal of revolt, when it should arrive off Stilo, Campanella's native place. It came in sight on the fourteenth of September, 1599, but he had been arrested, by order of the Viceroy, fifteen days before, and his companions were put to death with almost every variety of punishment.

effected the same object, in Venice. The Italian dukes endeavoured to compensate for the loss of their political importance, by all the pleasures and luxuries of a southern court. The princes of Tuscany alone preserved that respect for science and the arts, which had shed such lustre on the name of the Medici. They promoted the study of natural philosophy, of painting, and of sculpture; pursuits which are least likely to awaken the suspicions of a jealous government. The academy of Cimento, and Cardinal Leopold's fine gallery, were the ornaments of Florence during the seventeenth century; but from the time that Cosmo I. thought it necessary to appease the courts of Rome and of Madrid, by delivering up his confidential friend* to the Inquisition, freedom of opinion had been as effectually banished from Florence as from the rest of Italy. Since the close of the sixteenth century, the house of Este had been deprived of the duchy of Ferrara, reverting to the church, by the failure of the legitimate branch; and though its illegitimate successors retained Modena and Reggio, they seemed to have lost, with their chief dominions, that enthusiasm for letters which had hitherto constituted their proudest fame. The house of Gonzaga, so cruelly punished by the pillage and massacre of Mantua, in the year 1630, for having been attached to the interests of France, sought to bury the remembrance of its calamities in a system of depravity, unparallcled, perhaps, in the history of royal houses, and which caused its downfall at the close of the same century. The Farnese family, raised to the sovereignty of Parma and Piacenza in the preceding age, produced only one great character, in the Prince Alessandro, the rival of Henry IV., who, however, never revisited his dominions, after leaving them to take the command of the armies of Philip II. In his successors, we enumerate only cruel and voluptuous tyrants, of weak and indolent capacities. As subjects of applause, however, are eagerly sought after to illustrate the lives of sovereigns, we find them commended for the encouragement they afforded to the Italian Opera, which then first came into notice. The heroic character of the princes of Savoy, alone, distinguished above that of the other despi-

* Pietro Carnesecchi was beheaded, and his body afterwards burnt at Rome, on the third of October, 1567, on a charge of inclining towards the reformed opinions of the times.

cable potentates of Italy, confers lustre on the annals of the seventeenth century. The ruinous wars, however, in which they were constantly engaged, endangered their political existence, and left them as little leisure as means for the promotion of literature and of the arts.

Such was the state of Italy during the same period that the reigns of Louis XIII. and XIV. added so much to the power and reputation of France. But we ought not to be surprised to find the seventeenth century disgraced by universal degeneracy in Italy, and the name of *Seicentisti* applied, even amongst the Italians themselves, in the way of opprobrium. Under such a government, the corruption became general. It infected the principles and manners of the people, and added to the indolence and love of pleasures, so natural to the inhabitants of the South. We shall, however, briefly proceed to cite a few names of those, who, resisting the torrent of bad taste, still adhered to the excellent principles so long established, as well as of those who, by misapplying their talents, opened the way for a crowd of imitators in a false route, and gave that character of extravagance and bad taste to the seventeenth century, for which it is so peculiarly distinguished.

The effects of this perverted taste were first perceived during the latter part of the sixteenth century; the period closing with the observations contained in the preceding chapter. The poets, of whom we now proceed to give some account, may be said to belong equally to both ages, both in point of time and in style of composition. The first of these who attracts our notice is Battista Guarini, who has long been ranked as one of the Italian classics. He was born at Ferrara, in the year 1537, and sprang from the same family which in the fifteenth century, gave birth to two other distinguished writers. He attached himself to the court of Ferrara, about the same time with Tasso, who was seven years younger than Guarini. He was employed by Alfonso II. in several embassies; and on the death of his royal patron, transferred himself to the court of Florence, and afterwards to that of Urbino. He died at Venice, in the year 1612. The poem of the *Pastor Fido*, on which his reputation now depends, was represented, for the first time, in 1585; when Tasso, whom he had imitated, was a prisoner in the hospital

of St. Anne. Its success far surpassed what had been witnessed at the representation of the *Amyntas*, and this tribute to its superiority was not undeserved. A more spirited and dramatic composition was here brought before the public; uniting all the sweetness of the idyl with the tenderness of erotic poetry; while the pastoral charms, usually attributed to Arcadia, and the languishing repose of its amorous dreams, have a much greater portion of the fire and animation of real life. The action of this piece was also more complete and probable, of its kind, and more suited to theatrical exhibition; and the beauties of poetry and of language were at least as profusely scattered in it as in the *Amyntas*. Guarini modelled this mixed dramatic pastoral on that mythological plan of the opera, afterwards so skilfully adopted by Metastasio, but which will not, however, bear a very strict examination.

Arcadia, supposed, for more than a century, to have fallen under the displeasure of Diana, is annually compelled to sacrifice a young virgin; and, according to a mysterious oracle, the fatal penalty will be imposed

> "Till two of race divine be join'd by Love;
> And high devotion of a faithful swain
> Expiate one woman's long and fatal error."*

Only two beings of celestial descent, however, Silvio and Amaryllis, are to be found in Arcadia, one of whom is sprung from Pan, the other from Hercules. The Arcadians are in hopes that their union may accomplish the meaning of the oracle, and they had been already betrothed to each other. But Silvio, insensible to love, delights only in the chase; ridiculing the charms of Amaryllis, as well as of Dorinda, who is passionately attached to him. Mirtillo, another shepherd, poor and of obscure birth, loves Amaryllis, and his affections are returned. Corisca, indulging a secret regard for Mirtillo, wishes, from a motive of jealousy, to betray Amaryllis, exposing her to the most injurious suspicions of having suffered herself to be seduced; and the shepherdesses of Arcadia

* Che duo semi del ciel congiunga Amore;
E di donna infedel l' antico errore
L' alta pietà d' un *Pastor Fido* ammende.
Act I. sc. 2.

being subjected to vestal laws, she was consequently adjudged to die. Mirtillo, however, resolves to devote himself for her; and he is about to be sacrificed in her place. The sacrificial knife is raised; but at that moment, his foster-father comes forward to prove that he is the officiating priest's own son, the brother of Silvio, and descended from the gods. The oracle is now fulfilled; two hearts of celestial origin are thus united in love; and the devotion of Mirtillo has merited the title of a faithful shepherd. By these nuptials, Arcadia is delivered from its annual tribute of blood. Silvio is softened by the charms of Dorinda, whom he happens to have unintentionally wounded in the chase; even the repentant Corisca meets with pardon; and the general happiness is complete.

Such are the materials for a plot, extended by Guarini into more than six thousand lines; and we can scarcely, at this period, conceive how so long a piece could have been represented. From the language of the dialogue, the trifling thoughts, and common places, and the flatness of the action, we easily gather that Guarini formed no idea of any impatience in the spectators, nor thought himself obliged to awaken their curiosity, and to rivet their attention to the story. Nor was he acquainted with the art, so important in the eyes of modern French critics, of connecting the different scenes, and of assigning probable motives for the appearance and disappearance of the persons of the drama. Each scene is, for the most part, a separate act, with very little reference, either in action, or in time and place, to that which immediately precedes it; and this want of consistency, as a whole, throws an air of singular coldness over the first act, consisting of five scenes, which unconnectedly follow each other in the manner of five different plots. The versification of the *Pastor Fido* appears to me even more pleasing than that of *Amyntas*. Guarini gave exquisite grace and harmony to his verses; passing, without effort or abruptness, from the *versi sciolti* to measures the most varied and complex. Indeed, no prose could have conveyed his sentiments more accurately; while no species of lyric poetry, in the ode or in the canzone, display a happier combination of rhymes, or a greater variety of feet, both regular and free. The piece is, perhaps, more deficient in spirit than in poetry; the sentiments are often trite; and the author attempts to disguise his want of originality by frequent

affectation and conceit.* Its chief attraction, and which very much contributed to its success, is the poetical exhibition of the passion of love, the source of the various incidents throughout the entire action of the piece, throwing its voluptuous charm, equally over the poet, the actors, and the spectators. It has, indeed, more than once been criticized, and not without reason, on the ground of its moral tendency: but, if we grant that such a scenic representation of the passion be admissible, developed in its most ardent and impetuous character, Guarini must then be allowed to have succeeded, almost inimitably, in communicating the feeling to his audience and to his readers. He presented the lyric and erotic poets of his country with an example, which long maintained its influence over their taste. In his most moving situations, Guarini has often contrived to bestow upon his characters the language of truth and nature; and Voltaire remarks, with justice, that he is among the first dramatic writers, who affected their audience to tears.† Guarini has left, also, some sonnets and madrigals,

* We have a specimen of the *Concetti*, on the first appearance of Mirtillo on the scene, act I. sc. 2; but, excepting the two first lines, the remainder is very pleasing:

Cruda *Amarilli!* che col nome ancora
D'*amare*, ahi lasso! *amaramente* insegni;
Amarilli del candido ligustro
Più candida e più bella,
Ma dell' aspido sordo
E più sorda, e più fera, e più fugace;
Poichè col dir t' offendo,
Io mi morrò tacendo:
Ma grideran per me le piaggie e i monti,
E questa selva, a cui
Sì spesso il tuo bel nome
Di risonare insegno;
Per me piangendo i fonti,
E mormorando i venti,
Diranno i miei lamenti;
Parlerà nel mio volto
La pietate e 'l dolore:
E se fia muta ogni altra cosa, al fine
Parlerà il mio morire,
E ti dirà la morte il mio martire.

† Of this kind is the speech of Amaryllis, when, accused of being dishonoured, she is conducted to the temple. *Act IV. sc. 5.*

Padre mio, caro padre,
E tu ancor m' abbandoni?

Padre

in which he has carried his false taste to a much greater excess than in the *Pastor Fido.*

Padre d' unica figlia,
Così morir mi lasci, e non m' aiti ?
Almen non mi negar gli ultimi baci.
Ferirà pur duo petti un ferro solo :
Verserà pur la piaga
Di tua figlia, il tuo sangue.
Padre, un tempo sì dolce e caro nome,
Ch' invocar non soleva indarno mai,
Così le nozze fai
Della tua cara figlia?
Sposa il mattino, e vittima la sera?

I shall, to this, add an example of a different style, as beautiful in its way. It is a chorus of hunters and shepherds, extolling the fame of Silvio for delivering the country from the depredations of a terrifie wild boar. *Act IV. sc.* 6.

PASTORI.

O fanciul glorioso,
Che sprezzi per altrui la propria vita !
Questo è il vero cammino
Di poggiare a virtute ;
Perocchè innanzi a lei,
Là fatica e il sudor poser gli Dei.
Chi vuol goder degli agi
Soffra prima i disagi :
Nè da riposo infruttuoso e vile
Ch' il faticar aborre,
Ma da fatica che virtù precorre
Nasce il vero riposo.

CACCIATORI.

O fanciul glorioso,
Vera stirpe d'Alcide,
Che fere già sì mostruose ancide !

PASTORI.

O fanciul glorioso,
Per cui le ricche piaggie,
Prive già di cultura e di cultori,
Han ricovrati i lor fecondi onori !
Và pur sicuro, e prendi
Omai, bifolco, il neghittoso aratro ;
Spargi il gravido seme,
E il caro frutto in sua stagione attendi.
Fiero piè, fiero dente,
Non fia più che tel tronchi o tel calpesti
Nè sarai per sostegno
Della vita, a te grave, altrui noioso.

The long life of Gabriello Chiabrera distinguished the close of the sixteenth, and the first half of the following century. He was born at Savona, on the eighth day of June, 1552, and he died in the year 1637. His life, of which he has himself given us an account, does not abound with incidents. He spent his time partly at Rome, and partly at Savona, wholly immersed in the study of the ancient authors, and in the composition of his own voluminous works. It was his misfortune to be alternately banished from both these places, by affairs of honour quite of an Italian character, in which it appears that he assassinated both his adversaries. We learn from a notice of his life, written by himself, and prefixed to his works, that, it so happened that, without offering the slightest provocation, he was insulted by a Roman gentleman; for which affront having revenged himself, he was constrained to leave Rome, and unable to obtain a pardon, during ten years. Having had likewise another affair, in his native place, in which he was slightly wounded, he again revenged himself with his own hand, and was banished for many months. He married when he was fifty years of age, but had no children. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-six, and without ever having suffered any serious indisposition. Born in easy circumstances, he was enabled to indulge his inclination for travel. Few writers have surpassed him in the extent of their productions. He left behind him five epic poems, in the manner of Ariosto; innumerable dramatic pieces for musical accompaniments, the earliest specimens extant of the opera; together with a number of treatises on the Passion of our Saviour, and many other religious productions, in prose. But his lyric pieces, by which he acquired so great a reputation, and which are printed separately from the rest, in three volumes, far exceed his other works. In these, Chiabrera was the first who ventured beyond the prescribed forms and limits, derived by the Italians from the Provençals, respecting lyrical composition. Exonerating himself from the painful trammels of the measured sonnet and the canzone, he boldly aimed at catching the true scope and spirit of the Pindaric and the Anacreontic ode. Possessing a very exact ear, he quickly discovered the kind of harmony best adapted to Italian verse. By dividing the strophe into short lines, and by varying it according to the

rules of prosody, although not with the same nice distinctions as the ancients, he was enabled to introduce into the versification of his odes a very fine and agreeable variety. He gave them a flow of metre, which enabled him to drop the very frequent recurrence of rhyme ; and he also succeeded admirably in varying his versification, and adapting it to the opposite subjects of love, of pleasure, of flattery, and religion, on all of which he treated. Many of his odes were addressed to princes, who merited the poet's enthusiasm as little as they excite our own. The vigour, the vivacity, and the inspired character of his genius, certainly carried Italian poetry to a very high pitch of excellence. No writer, says Tiraboschi, better knew how to transfuse the graces of Anacreon, and the daring flights of Pindar, into Italian verse, than Chiabrera ; no one displayed more of the audacity of his art ; of that springy strength and inspired ardour, which breathed in the language of elder Greece, and in the absence of which there is, indeed, no true poetry. Though his expressions are not always the most elegant, and his metaphorical language is somewhat too bold, yet the elevation of the thoughts, the vivacity of the images, and a certain divine enthusiasm, the very soul of lyrical composition, leave us little inclination to dwell upon his faults.

Contemporary with Chiabrera, flourished Giovanni Battista Marini, the celebrated innovator on classic Italian taste, and who first seduced the poets of the seventeenth century into that laboured and affected style, which his own richness and vivacity of imagination were so well calculated to recommend. The most whimsical comparisons, pompous and overwrought descriptions, with a species of poetical punning and research, were soon esteemed, under his authority, as beauties of the very first order.

Marini was born at Naples, in the year 1569. When very young, he secretly withdrew from his father's house, in order to escape from the irksome study of the law, to which profession he was brought up by his father, who was himself an advocate. But his singular talents for poetry were already known, and had procured for him patrons among the Neapolitan nobility. He found more at Rome, where he also met with Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini, who had placed, though late, the laurel crown upon the head of Tasso. He

accompanied the Cardinal to the court of Turin, and upon being introduced by his new patron, his productions appeared to make a more favourable and lively impression than they had before done. His poetry, abounding in lively imagery, and sparkling with *concetti* and antitheses, attracted the attention of all those writers who, in their research after novelty and effect, failed to observe the just limits, even where they had attained to superior excellence in poetical composition. Marini's smoothness of style and versification, his force and vividness of description, and the voluptuous and striking display of the most delicate traits of passion, in which his genius was so inexhaustible, procured for him a reputation which he has ever since continued to enjoy. He was shortly placed at the head of a poetical party. His followers triumphantly proclaimed his excellence, above all others, in the abundant stores of his imagination, and in the generous ardour with which he gave free scope to the impulses of his genius; while his opponents attempted to maintain the purity of taste, characteristic of the preceding age, without exhibiting a single spark of its genius. These literary feuds were as keen as they were obstinate, and bitter in proportion to the impossibility of indulging in any more serious subjects of controversy. Some species of intellectual discussion was absolutely requisite to a people like the Italians, who had lost even the shadow of civil and religious freedom; and the study of mythology was the only field left open to the enquiries of the human mind. Every nobler thought, every generous sentiment, was considered incompatible with the safety of the sovereign and the state. We no longer wonder, then, that such a subject acquired so much importance in their eyes. In a commendatory sonnet, addressed to a contemporary poet, Marini, enumerating the labours of Hercules, had confounded the Nemæan lion with the hydra of Lerna; and this was enough to excite the most violent outcry against him. One party of these literary gladiators attacked, while another defended him. Perhaps no question involving the dearest interests of mankind could have given birth to more discussion, and more voluminous works; no quarrels, derived from the most tragic sources, could have produced so many violent and outrageous libels. Nor did the parties confine themselves to this. Satirical poetry was not the only weapon they launched

against each other. Murtola, Marini's poetical rival, aimed a musquet-shot at the leader of the innovating sect, as he turned the corner of a street in Turin; but, missing its object, the ball struck one of the prince's courtiers walking at his side, who immediately fell. We are told that Marini endeavoured to obtain Murtola's pardon from the prince, and that his adversary, instead of evincing his gratitude on the occasion, brought an accusation before Charles Emanuel against Marini, stating that the poet had reflected on the prince's character, in one of his satiric poems. Marini was thrown into prison, while the alleged charge underwent examination; nor was he set at liberty, until he had satisfactorily proved that the obnoxious poem had been published at Naples, in his early youth, before he had had the honour of meeting with the Duke of Savoy, and that consequently he could not very well have drawn his portrait. On regaining his freedom, Marini went into France, where he obtained the patronage of Mary de' Medici, who conferred a considerable pension on him. There, he produced the most celebrated of his poems, entitled the *Adonis*. Its publication gave rise to a fresh literary contest in Italy. In his vindication, Marini retorted upon his adversaries with much rancour, and his followers were still more violent than himself. During the heat of the engagement, Marini made his last visit to Italy, where he was received with great applause. His entrance into Rome almost resembled a triumph. He thence pursued his journey to Naples, his native place, where he ended his days, in the year 1625.

Marini was a very voluminous writer. He left a great number of sonnets, eclogues, and idyls; canzoni, epithalamiums, panegyrics, and a series of epigrams intended for a gallery of portraits. I am only acquainted with his *Adonis*, and, I must confess, not very intimately so with the whole of it. The poem is written in twenty cantos, many of these consisting of no less than three hundred octave verses, and one of them of more than five hundred; so that it exceeds in length the great work of Ariosto. A slight view will suffice to give an idea of the peculiar excellences and defects, which formerly procured for this poet such a distinguished reputation.

The *Adonis* of Marini is of a mixed epic and romantic

character; and the subject is taken from the loves of Venus and Adonis. It opens at the moment that Cupid, incensed against his mother, wounds her with one of his arrows, inspiring her with a passion for the youthful shepherd, whom he conveys from the deserts of Arabia into the isle of Cyprus. But the poet, as if delighting rather in picturesque description, than in recounting events, treats each separate canto as if it were a short poem, to which he gives an appropriate title. Of this kind are *Felicity*, *The Palace of Love*, *Love's surprise*, *The Tale* (of Cupid and Psyche, an episode composing the fourth canto), *The Tragedy*, *The Garden*, &c. In his descriptions of the pleasures of love, Marini scatters the flowers of his poetry with a profuse hand, over all imaginable situations and incidents. He overpowers us with the astonishing variety of his images, his sentiments, and his refinements upon tenderness and pleasure, on which he seems to have delighted to dwell. His style is remarkable for its harmony, and for a rich flow of passion and expression, which in the eighth canto is carried to its highest point. Nice feelings of morality and propriety, however, seldom restrain him in his descriptions, any more than the rules of sound taste and criticism, in the distribution of his work. The conclusion of his poem assumes quite a romantic cast. The jealousy of Mars and of a malicious fairy interrupts the loves of Venus. Adonis is torn from her side; but in vain the fairy tries to seduce his affections. He effects his liberty, and regains his Venus; when, his passion for the chase involving him in fresh perils, the poem closes with his death, and with the funeral rites celebrated over his tomb.

We cannot consider the Chevalier Marini—a title conferred upon him by Charles Emanuel,—as very fortunate in the selection of his subject. In itself, it is destitute of interest; as the gods, and more particularly those of the pagan world, awaken no sort of sympathy in mere mortals; while the poet, renouncing all keeping and probability, preserved too little nature, both in his incidents and descriptions. But Marini aspired to no heroic wreaths; he revelled in the myrtle bowers. The poet of pleasure and of wit, he presents us with a gay series of enchanting pictures, but is by no means solicitous as to the manner in which it is arranged. In regard to wit and spirit, the poem is replete with all those

sparkling graces so much admired by his contemporaries. Plays upon words, endless antitheses, and striking images, together with every thing calculated to surprise or to bewilder his readers, admired before it is comprehended, and despised as false when understood, are the chief characteristics of his poetry.

Enjoying, for a period, the highest degree of popularity and poetic fame, Marini was extolled, during the seventeenth century, even above those writers whom we have been taught to consider as the classic authorities of Italy. The Spaniards, who imitated, and even went beyond him in his own eccentric career, held him in the highest estimation while the French were scarcely less enthusiastic in his praise, the effects of which may be traced in their poetry up to the time of Rousseau, who has given a great number of Marini's verses in *The new Heloise.* I shall here select a few stanzas out of the eighteenth canto, entitled *La Morte*, containing a description of the chase in which Adonis was killed by the wild boar:

That soft white hand now hurls the threatening spear,
Straining each nerve, against the monster's side,
But, ah! in vain, to check his fierce career;
Harmless it flew, nor drew the crimson tide;
And stouter heart and stouter arm might fear
To urge the quivering point, he vainly tried,
Through that dark bristling shield; like some firm wall,
Or anvil, fix'd it stood; no red drops fall.

Adonis saw; his purple cheeks grew pale;
The startled blood flew to his throbbing breast;
Late he repents, late sees his bold hopes fail,
And doubts, and turns to fly, while onward prest
The terrors of his foe, that ever quail
Young hunters' hearts; sharp growl, erected crest,
And rapid pace, with eyes more fearful bright
Than meteors seen 'mid darkest clouds of night.*

---

* Con la tenera mano il ferro duro
Spinge contro il cinghial, quanto più pote;
Ma più robusto braccio e più securo
Penetrar non poria dov' ei percote;
L' acuto acciar, com' habbia un saldo muro
Ferito, overo una scabrosa cote,
Com' habbia in un ancudine percosso,
Torna senza trar fuor stilla di rosso.

Quando

These lines are calculated to convey an idea of the lofty harmony of verse, and the picturesque powers of a poet, who, in an age of greater freedom, might have so far counteracted his peculiarities, and restrained his imagination by models of a purer taste, as to have ranked amongst the most distinguished poets of Europe. The boar is supposed to be in pursuit of Adonis; and Marini, in one of those whimsical flights of imagination, in which he so much loved to indulge at the expense of good taste, divests the enraged animal of its natural ferocity, as if suddenly enchanted with the beauty of the young hunter, who is flying for his life.*

Adonis attempts once more to repulse the monster with his dart; but he is stretched upon the plain; and the ferocious animal repeatedly attacking him, pierces his tender side with grievous wounds.

Soft-breathing sighs, sweet languor, sweetest hue
Of pallid flowers, Death's ensigns beautiful,
With Love's triumphant smiles, no terrors threw
O'er his bright face and form, and eyes late full
Of amorous fires. Though quench'd those orbs of blue,
Their beauty doth not yet look cold or dull:
Shining, as Love and Death young brothers were,
And sported midst those graces, cold as fair.
Cool fountains shed their urns, warm-gushing tears,
Proud oaks and pines low bend their mournful heads,
And Alpine height, and forest murmuring hears,
And pours a flood of sorrow o'er the meads.
Now weep the Nymphs, and Dryads weep with fears
For Venus now; her lost Adonis bleeds;

Quando ciò mira Adon, riede in se stesso,
Tardi pentito, et meglio si consiglia,
Pensa a lo scampo suo, se gli è permesso,
E teme, e di fuggir partito piglia;
Perche gli scorge, in riguardarlo appresso
Quel fiero lume entro l' horrende ciglia
Ch' ha il ciel talhor, quando trà nubi rotte
Con tridente di foco apre la notte.

Canto 18. *st.* 92.

* Col mostaccio crudel baciar gli volle
Il fianco, che vincea le nevi istesse,
E credendo lambir l' avorio molle,
Del fier dente la stampa entro v' impresse:
Sezzi fur gli urti, atti amorosi e gesti
Non le 'nsegnò natura altri che questi.

While spring and mountain-haunting Nymphs lament;
Through springs and mountains is a sighing sent.*

Among Marini's innumerable imitators, Claudio Achillini† and Geronimo Preti are the first to claim our attention. Few writers ever attained to so high a degree of reputation during their lives, and few have afterwards sunk into more complete oblivion. Italy, at that time, languished under the dominion of bad taste, whose influence, over the mind and the imagination, seemed to stifle every other species of talent. It was only by improving, and refining on the lustre of each other's thoughts, that authors could then flatter themselves with hopes of making a brilliant display; and to rest satisfied with the mere representation of truth and nature, either in sentiment or description, was, at that period, only to court obscurity. This corrupted taste of the Italians, for some time, likewise infected the literature of France. Achillini addressed a sonnet to Cardinal Richelieu, on the raising of the siege of Casal, in 1629, beginning with the following line:

"Sudate, o fochi! a preparar metalli!"

"Sweat, sweat, ye fires, to frame metallic tubes."

When this line was written, he was in high repute at the court of France. Such a verse is now only cited as an excellent specimen of this ridiculous and affected style. Achillini was the author, also, of a canzone inscribed to Richelieu, in honour of the Dauphin's birth, which obtained

* O come dolce spira e dolce langue,
O qual dolce pallor gl' imbianca il volto!
Horribil nò, che nell' horror, nel sangue
Il riso col piacer stassi raccolto.
Regna nel ciglio ancor voto ed essangue
E trionfa negli occhi amor sepolto.
E chiusa o spenta l' una e l' altra stella
Lampeggia, e morte in si bel viso e bella.

Arsero di pietate i freddi fonti,
S' intenerir le dure querce e i pini;
E scaturir da le frondose fronti
Lagrimosi ruscelli i gioghi Alpini;
Pianser le ninfe, ed ululur da monti
E da profondi lor gorghi vicini,
Driadi e Napee stempraro in pianto i lumi,
Quelle ch' amano i boschi, e queste i fiumi.

† Achillini was born in the year 1574, and died in 1640.

for him great consideration, as well as more substantial preferments. We give below a specimen of his *Madrigal*, composed in the very spirit of an age, sparkling with all those *concetti* of the South, once so rapturously admired.*

The Scuderys, the Voitures, and the Balsacs, were among the foremost who imitated this fastidious and affected style, in France. It became the reigning fashion of the day. Boileau and Moliere were the authors who most contributed to bring it into disrepute. These revivers of good taste among the French, perceiving that such corrupt examples had been held out by Italy, expressed great contempt for Italian poetry, of which the purest ore appeared to them nothing better than tinsel. They introduced into France the word *concetti*, as being characteristic of the most affected and extravagant productions; whilst this term, which really signifies a power of poetic conception, is invariably received in a favourable sense by the Italians. Thus, they not only resisted the progress of false taste in France, but set an example, in their works, which afterwards extended its influence to Italian literature, and eventually induced succeeding writers to renounce the affectation and absurdities formerly so much in vogue. Public opinion was, at that period, subjected to such restraint, that Alessandro Marchetti, having translated the poem of Lucretius *De Naturâ Rerum*, with an elegance and vigour of poetical imagination which raised him above the spirit of his age, Cosmo III. would not consent to its publication, on the plea of its containing the Epicurean doctrines. If we consider the subject well, there are scarcely any opinions which have not some kind of connexion either with religion or with politics, and when every thing relating to these two subjects is dictated by a jealous government, under which every idea, varying from the standard of established authority, is considered as a crime against divine or human majesty, we must allow tha· freedom of mind and strength of genius are nc

* Col fior de' fiori in mano
Il mio Lesbin rimiro,
Al fior respiro, e 'l pastorel sospiro
Il fior sospira odori,
Lesbin respira ardori;
L' odor dell' uno odoro,
L' ardor dell' altro adoro,
Ed odorando ed adorando i' sento
Dal odor dal ardor ghiaccia e tormento.

longer to be expected. And should some individuals still have the courage to aspire to a degree of literary fame, their only chance of success seems to lie in the use of *concetti*, hyperbole, and affectation, with which they may make a brilliant display, and console themselves for the loss of nobler and more serious pursuits in the cause of freedom and of truth.

There is, indeed, only one poet belonging to the seventeenth century distinguished for his patriotic sentiments. That poet is the senator, Filicaia. It is somewhat remarkable with what ardour the spark of ancient liberty revived in his breast. He was a Florentine, born on the thirtieth of December, 1642, and he closed his career on the twenty-fifth of September, 1707. His genius took its source in deep national and religious feelings, and in interests affecting the repose of Europe. It was first excited by witnessing the siege of Vienna by the Turks, in the year 1683, and its gallant defence by Charles V. duke of Lorraine, with its final deliverance by John Sobieski. Filicaia composed several *canzoni*, breathing heroic ardour, joy, and religious gratitude, in celebration of the Christian victory, and in a style very superior to any thing we find in the works of other poets of the age. In these we have the rare, and, indeed, the single example, during an entire century, of a native of Italy giving free expression to his thoughts and feelings in his poetry. The odes which he addressed to Leopold I., to the Duke of Lorraine, and to the King of Poland, all of whom returned very flattering acknowledgments to the poet in their letters, excited general admiration and enthusiasm, wherever they appeared. The wars of the succession, and the devastations committed by the French and German armies, in Italy, soon called forth new patriotic strains from his indignant muse. The calamities of his country were a theme not easily exhausted, and a series of productions were expressly devoted to the subject. There are six sonnets and a *canzone*. One of the former of these, which is here introduced, maintains, to this day, the highest degree of reputation; and it is, perhaps, the most celebrated poetic specimen which the Italian literature of the seventeenth century affords.

Italia! thou to whom, in evil hour,
The fatal boon of beauty Nature gave,
Yet on thy front the sentence did engrave,
That ceaseless woe should be thy only dower!

Ah ! were that beauty less, or more thy power !
That he who now compels thee to his arms,
Might gaze with cold indifference on thy charms,
Or tremble at thine eye's indignant lower;
Thou should'st not, then, behold, in glittering line,
From the high Alps embattled throngs deseend,
And Gallic hordes pollute thy Po's clear wave;
Nor, whilst encompass'd close by spears, not thine,
Should'st thou by foreign hands thy rights defend,
Conquering or conquer'd, evermore a slave.*

While it is allowed that a certain grandeur of patriotic feeling pervades this sonnet, we may nevertheless trace, in one or two of the lines, the effects of the spirit of the age in which the poet wrote. The remaining sonnets are, by no means, of equal merit. Filicaia does not appear to have composed them in a free and consistent spirit. He was somewhat too careful of giving offence, in these heroic effusions, to the French, the German, and the Italian potentates. He dared not to show the least partiality; and least of all to inspire his countrymen with a wish to revenge their wrongs. With these views, he succeeded in avoiding to compromise his safety, but did not much add to the lustre of his fame.

The same age is remarkable for several mock heroic poems, which made their appearance from time to time, and whose reputation has outlived that of more serious works. The *Secchia Rapita* of Alessandro Tassoni, a native of Modena, born in 1565, has entitled him to rank among the best poets of Italy. He accompanied the Cardinal Colonna into Spain, and returned with very strong prejudices, which he did not attempt to disguise, against that country. His critical disquisitions first brought him into notice. He assailed the literary autho-

* Italia ! Italia ! o tu cui feo la sorte
Dono infelice di bellezza, ond' hai
Funesta dote d' infiniti guai,
Che in fronte scritti per gran doglia porte.
Deh, fossi tu men bella, ò almen più forte !
Onde assai più ti paventasse, o assai
T' amasse men, chi del tuo bello ai rai
Par che si strugga, e pur si sfida a morte.
Che or giù dall' Alpi non vedrei torrenti
Scender d' armati, ne di sangue tinta
Bever l' onda del Pò Gallici armenti :
Nè te vedrei, del non tuo ferro cinta,
Pugnar col braccio di straniere genti,
Per servir sempre. ò vincitrice ò vinta.

rity of Aristotle, and ventured to question the established merits of Petrarch, as a poet. This opened a new field of controversy, in which he engaged with the utmost activity and ardour. On the death of Cardinal Colonna, he entered into the service of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, who employed him in a public character on several occasions. Towards the latter part of his life he visited Tuscany, where he terminated his days, in the year 1635. He published his poem of the *Secchia Rapita*, or *The Rape of the Bucket*, in 1622; with a notice that it had been written by him when very young, and had been ever since deposited in his desk. He probably conceived that it might, in some way, affect the dignity of a statesman, to be the declared author of a burlesque poem, more particularly at that advanced period of life; but its versification every where betrays marks of the author's maturer powers.

The subject of the *Secchia Rapita* arose out of the party wars between the Modenese and the Bolognese, during the thirteenth century; in which it appears that the Bucket was carried away from a well, by the heroes of Modena, out of the very heart of Bologna, and borne in triumph into their own city. There it is supposed to be to this day carefully preserved, under double lock and keys, in the belfry of the cathedral. The rage of the Bolognese at having suffered such a trophy to grace the walls of their adversaries, together with their struggles and stratagems to recover their treasure, afforded Tassoni materials out of which to form twelve mock-heroic cantos. The chief object of the poet, I am inclined to think, was a satirical exposure of the petty Italian wars, which exhausted the country, and left its natives an easy prey to the foreign sword. But if such were, indeed, his motive, the author appears soon to have lost sight of it; and his readers are quite at a loss to discover it through twelve books of battles, which have, in reality, too strong a resemblance to each other. They are told, however, with much ease and spirit, and with occasional elevation of style; qualities which we can by no means refuse to this amusing poet.* The introductions to his several cantos are peculiarly rich in picturesque

* In his description of the manner in which king Heinsius was taken prisoner, Tassoni, while he ridicules the grave style of the real Epic, employs one of the happiest images which the best specimens of the

and poetical ornament; while his manner of characterizing the different personages engaged, evinces much real humour. Such is the surprise of the military equipage of the Florentines, flaming with ornaments of gold, so inviting to the avaricious eye of the enemy, and found to contain only dried figs and walnuts; which conveys an amusing idea of the sumptuous parsimony attributed to the Florentine people.* It is to be

latter can afford. To this he adds a humorous picture of the manners of the times, as well as of the provincial eloquence of a magistrate, and of the jargon in which he spoke. *Canto* vi. *st.* 42.

Il Re si scuote, e a un tempo il ferro caccia
Nel ventre a Zagarin, che gli è rimpetto;
Ma non può svilupparsi da le braccia
Di Tognon, che gli cigne i fianchi, e 'l petto:
Ed ecco Periteo giugne, e l' abbraccia
Subito anch' egli, e 'l tien serrato e stretto
Ei l' uno e l' altro or tira, or alza, or spigne,
Ma da' legami lor non si disciegne.

Qual fiero toro, a cui di funi ignote
Cinto sia il corno e 'l piè da cauta mano,
Muggisce, sbuffa, si contorce, e scuote,
Urta, si lancia, e si dibatte in vano;
E quando al fin de' lacci uscir non puote
Cader si lascia afflitto e stanco al piano:
Tal l'indomito Re, poichc comprese
D' affaticarsi indarno, alfin si rese.

Fù drizzato il carroccio, e fu rimesso
In sedia il Podestà tutto infangato,
Non si trovò il robon, ma gli fu messo
Indosso una corazza da soldato,
Le calze rosse abenche avea, col fesso
Dietro, e dinanzi un braghetton frappato,
E una squarcina in man, larga una spanna,
Parea il bargel di Caifas e d' Anna.

Ei gridava in Bresciano; Innanz, Innanzi,
Che l' è rott' ol nemin, valent soldati
Feghe sbità la schitta a tucch sti Lanzi
Maledetti da De, scommunegati.
Così dicendo, già vedea gli avanzi
Del destro corno, andar quà e là sbandati,
E raggirarsi per que' campi aprichi
Cercando di salvar la pancia a fichi

* La terza insegna fù de Fiorentini,
Con cinque mila trà cavalli e fanti,
Che conduccano Anton Francesco Dini
E Averardo di Baccio Cavalcanti:

Non

regretted that here, as in other instances, the burlesque poetry of the age should be destitute of that species of interest to be conferred upon it by liberty alone; and we really hardly find it worth our while to amuse ourselves at the expense of personages who have been buried for the last five hundred years, and with whom we have no points of resemblance, in manners, in customs, or in character. The implied satire on the democratical government of the Bolognese in the thirteenth century, or the wars of King Heinsius, are of too insipid a flavour for us; and, without looking for much stinging satire in a mock-heroic poem, we might reasonably expect something a little more lively.

About the same period, flourished Francesco Bracciolini, a native of Pistoia,* who likewise produced a comic-heroic poem, under the title of *Lo Scherno degli Dei*, or *The Mockery of the Gods*. They are, in truth, the Pagan deities, introduced by Bracciolini among the hills of Tuscany, and mingling with the peasants of the place, in order to make themselves, on all occasions, more agreeably ridiculous. In a dialogue by way of preface, he boasts with infinite complacency of the service he had rendered to true religion, by this witty triumph over ancient errors. He very frequently presents us with mythology travestied. The gods declaim in a mean and vulgar dialect; and he succeeds in exciting a smile at the contrast between the grace and dignity which our memory still

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Non s' usavano Starne e Marzolini
Nè polli d' India allor, ne vin di Chianti;
Ma le lor vittovaglie eran caciole,
Noci, e castagne, e sorbe secche al sole.

E di queste n' avean con le bigonce
Mille asinelli al dipartir carcati,
Acciò per quelle strade alpestre e sconce
Non patisser di fame i lor soldati:
Ma le some coperte in guisa e conce
Avean con panni d' un color segnati,
Che facean di lontan mostra pomposa
Di salmeria superba e preziosa.

Canto v. *st.* 36.

It is to possess themselves of these, that in the following canto, the soldiers of Garfagnana, with the Germans, abandon King Heinsius, who, being thus deserted, is made prisoner.

* Born 1566, and died 1645.

attaches to the Homeric fables, and the meanness of the language and of the interests of the lowest classes of the people, among whom his heroes dwell.* In a few instances, however, the author seems to rise above his usual strain of parody, when his descriptions assume a more pleasing and poetical character. We have an instance of this kind in his introduction of the portrait of a votary of Bacchus, whom Venus discovers asleep in a solitary cave.†

* Of this description is the dialogue between Bellona and Mars, the former of whom wishes to persuade her brother to attack Vulcan. *Canto* i. *st.* 29.

Dicendo, O bella cosa, il Dio dell' armi
Scender dal ciel per far una quistione,
E poi fuggirsi ? un ignominia parmi
Da non lavarla mai ranno o sapone ;
Io per te cominciava a vergognarmi,
Però discesi dal sovran balcone,
E voglio in ogni modo, ò molto ò poco
Che tu meni le man col Dio del foco.

Marte risponde all' hor, Come tu credi
Per paura ò viltà non mi ritiro,
Ch' al corpo, al sangue, il pesterei co piedi
E ridurrélo in forma di butiro ;
Mà perche fabbricar piche, ne spiedi
Non sà se non costui, se ben rimiro,
E s' io l' uccido, al poco mio giudizio
Cade 'l mestier dell' arme in precipizio.

In oltre tu non sai ch' egli è fratello
Nostro, e Venere sua, nostra cognata,
E toccherebbe a noi farle il mantello
Da vedova modesta e sconsolata,
E rivestire a brun quel ghiottoncello
D' amore, e tutta quanta la brigata ;
E saria d' uopo per nostro decoro
Spendere ne la cera del mortoro.

† Appar nel mezzo, infra due pietre rotte
Da l' età lunga un antro orrido, e voto,
Pieno d' incerto lume, e d' una notte
Che non lascia trà l' ombre il mondo ignoto,
Per diritto sentier la bocca inghiotte
Ne l' ampio ventre il nubiloso Noto,
Suona la grotta a questo vento, e freme,
Da lui percossa, e nessun altro teme.

Passa la Dea nel orrid' antro, ov' ella
Sente il misto romor che fuor se n' esce,
E illuminando la nascosa cella
Toglie a lei l' ombra, a se bellezza accresce,

Così

We can scarcely convey an idea of the extreme violence and animosity with which the question of the first discovery of the comic epopee was then discussed in Italy. Was Tassoni or Bracciolini best entitled to the honour of original invention? It was pretty generally admitted, on all hands, that Tassoni had been the first to write, but that Bracciolini was the first to publish his production. There was, however, little comparison between the merits of the two poets; Bracciolini being considered as in every way inferior to his rival. It was easily perceived, both from their subject and the manner of treating it, that neither had been indebted to the other; while no one appeared to recollect, that after Berni, there could be little occasion for farther dispute respecting the origin of the mock epopee. But, in truth, the desire of a fresh literary warfare had arisen, and it was thus indulged. The excessive rancour of this controversy is quite characteristic of the seventeenth century, and offers a striking contrast between the fine intellectual energies which the Italians still displayed, and the very paltry interests for which it was their fate to contend. By arguing themselves into real warmth, in pursuit of objects equally vain and unprofitable, they created a kind of illusion, which imposed upon them for a moment, and

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Così trà rotte nuvole, più bella
Che per sereno ciel Cintia riesce,
E più diletta a riguardar la rosa
Cinta di spine infra la siepe ombrosa.

Nel orrid' antro uom' vermiglio e grasso
Sù per l' umido suol disteso giace,
Vinto dal vino, e 'l grave ciglio e basso
Preme alcun raggio a la visibil face;
La stanca fronte hà per guanciale un sasso
Di musco avvolto, e d' edera tenace,
Natural felpa, onde s' adorna e veste
Capezzal duro in coltrice terrestre.

Giace con la ritonda aperta bocca
Lo sturato barletto al lato manco,
E 'l turacciolo suo, ch' hor non l' imbocca
Pende legato a uno spaghetto bianco,
La saliera v' è ancor più volte tocca
Dal fiero ramolaccio acuto e franco
Vincitor de la lingua, onde è mestiere
Che trafitta da lui, dimandi bere.

ed them to believe that they had yet an existence—that they were not yet utterly extinct.

Of a later period, there are two more examples of the same species of epopee, which are highly appreciated by the lovers of Tuscan poetry at this day. The first of these is the *Malmantile racquistato*, by Lorenzo Lippi, published in 1676; the second is called the *Torracchione desolato*, from the pen of Paolo Minucci. It is well known that the Italians have a peculiar relish for the popular and idiomatic expressions used by the natives of Florence, in which, however rude and simple, they discover a certain harmony and grace; and the reputation of these poems is thus founded on their rare merit, in exhibiting the Florentine dialect in a perfectly pure, yet homely style. The Academy della Crusca, engaged, at that period, in compiling its voluminous dictionary, thus preparing another controversy between the Tuscans and the other literary parties, had, likewise, attended to the preservation of this more simple and familiar mode of speech. Many Italian writers, even of this age, still retain so much admiration of its peculiarities, that they consider no other dialect as comparable to it; nor any style as perfect, which is not founded on the language spoken by the common people of Florence, during the fourteenth century. Those, however, who are not prejudiced in favour of this popular and pedantic style, will take comparatively little interest in the two poems of the *Malmantile* and of the *Torracchione*. Next to the divine comedy of Dante, the *Malmantile* is, perhaps, the production on which the Italian critics have bestowed the most pains, and which has been published, accompanied with the most ample commentaries, and in the most splendid form.

The castle of Malmantile, the capture of which is the subject of the poem, is built upon an eminence in the lower Val d'Arno, about eight miles from Florence. One of the heroes declares, that it might pass for the eighth wonder of the world, but he does not inform us where it is situated. The force destined for the attack, was sent from the neighbourhood of Florence. But, though the author informs us that it embarks before arriving at its destination, he cautiously avoids giving us the least information respecting the country to which it is transported. The time is equally uncertain, and the heroes and heroines of the story have no sort of relation to the

inhabitants of this world, or, indeed, to any thing we know. By the authority of Turpin, which is frequently cited, and by histories of ogres and enchantments, we are transported to the romantic times of chivalry, at the same time that many popular allusions still remind us of the seventeenth century. By attempting to avoid the appearance of any individual application of his satire, the author ceases to interest or to fix the imagination of his readers; he leaves us no curiosity; and when we look for wit and spirit, we are presented with proverbs and provincialisms, whose language has little of the air of reality and truth. I have, indeed, had some difficulty to discover a few stanzas at all worthy of selection, to convey an idea of the merits of this too highly vaunted poem.*

* Era in quei tempi là quando i geloni
Tornano a chiuder l' osterie de cani
E talun che si spaccia in milioni
Manda al Presto il tabì pe' panni lani;
Ed era appunto l' ora che i crocchioni
Si calano a l' assedio de' caldani;
Ed escon con le canne e co' randelli
I ragazzi a pigliare i pipistrelli;

Quando in terra l' armata con la scorta
Del gran Baldone a Malmantil s' invia:
Onde un famiglio nel serrar la porta
Sentì romoreggiar tanta genia.
Un vecchio era quest' uom di vista corta,
Che l' erre ognor perdeva a l' osteria;
Talche tra il bere e l' esser ben d' età
Non ci vedeva più da terza in là.

Per questo mette mano a la scarsella
Ov' ha più ciarpe assai d' un rigattiere;
Perchè vi tiene infin la faverella
Che la mattina mette sul brachiere.
Come suol far chi giuoca a cruscherella,
Due ore andò a la cerca intere intere:
E poi ne trasse, in mezzo a due fagotti
Un par d occhiali affumicati e rotti.

I quali sopra il naso a petronciano
Con la sua flemma pose a cavalcioni.
Talchè meglio scoperse di lontano
Esser di gente armata più squadroni.
Spaurito di ciò cala pian piano
Per non dar ne la scala i pedignoni
E giunto a basso lagrima e singhiozza
Gridando quanto mai n' hà ne la strozza.

Dicendo

The rise of the opera may, perhaps, be considered as the only literary event of the seventeenth century of which Italy can justly boast. With the decline of literature, the triumph of the various arts of design had also ceased. Michael Angelo had been the contemporary of Ariosto; his pupils and successors flourished in the time of Tasso; and thenceforward the flashes of true genius no longer animated the canvass or the poet's page. The astonishing progress of musical science, however, succeeded to that of the sister arts, as if the intellectual energies of man sought developement in the only career left open to them; and those who felt within themselves the impulse of a creative faculty, had recourse, as a last resort, to harmony, in which they might give full and uncontrolled expression to their genius, without encountering the vengeance of inquisitions. Nor were the Italians, from their organization, less susceptible of the charms of music than of poetry and of painting. A fine natural taste led them at once to appreciate, with little effort or reflection, whatever was most pure and beautiful of its kind. The ablest composers of the present day venture not, without some distrust, to perform their new pieces for the opera, before the Lazzaroni of Naples; watching the motion of their pointed caps, filling the whole area of Santo Carlo, as a sure indication whether the music will succeed or not. No means are so effectual to rouse the modern Italians from a state of apathy as a fine voice and a striking style of execution; and I have frequently seen houses surrounded by the lower classes, struggling to hear an amateur concert, inspired by the genius of a celebrated female singer. The increasing progress and importance of music, at a time when poetry was on the decline, gave the former such a superiority, that poetry became a mere accessory and ornament to it. It was ren-

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Dicendo forte, perchè ognun l' intenda:
A l' armi a l' armi, suonisi a martello:
Si lasci il giuoco, il ballo e la merenda,
E serrinsi le porte a chiavistello;
Perchè quaggiù nel piano è la tregenda,
Che ne viene a la volta del castello:
E se non ci serriamo o facciam testa,
Mentre balliamo, vuol suonare a festa.

Canto iii. *st.* 3

dered subservient to the merest trifles, and to all the variations and fashions of the day; while the sister art approached nearer and nearer to perfection, in proportion to its established importance, and to the influence which it exerted over the other arts.

It is highly probable that on the first revival of the dramatic art, music accompanied theatrical representations. In imitation of the Greeks, the chorus was introduced into Italian tragedy, and it was invariably sung. Pastoral dramas were likewise interspersed with these songs, accompanied with instruments. But music had been only the accessory in such compositions, intended to give zest and perfection to the festival, but not to constitute its very nature. The first occasion on which this order was reversed, was in the year 1594. Ottavio Rinuccini, a Florentine poet, with little genius and invention, but with a fine musical ear, that seemed to feel the beauties of language only in relation to harmony, united his efforts to those of three musicians, Peri, Giacopo Corsi, and Caccini. Together they produced a mythological drama, in which they meant to display the united excellences of the fine arts in the most splendid dress. Rinuccini appeared to be less ambitious of the reputation of a poet, than of setting off his associates to the greatest advantage. He neglected nothing which might give attraction to the decorations and machinery, and surprise or captivate the senses of the audience. Men of letters had, at least, preserved the memory of the musical declamation of the Greeks, and Peri or Caccini imagined he had discovered that this consisted in the recitative, which he blended so intimately with the poetry, that there was nothing farther to be merely spoken, throughout the whole of the opera. Thus poetry, written only with a view to being sung, very soon assumed a different character; and the developement of scenes, already too extended, was no longer admissible. The poet's object was to produce effect, and to this he readily sacrificed the conduct of the piece, hastening or retarding the course of events as he thought best adapted to musical exhibition, rather than to the natural expression of the passions. In pursuit of a different species of harmony, he abandoned the lyric form of the *canzone*, on account of its length of period, and adopted that which Chiabrera was, at that time, employed in introducing into his

stanzas, borrowed from the ode of the ancients.* This complete union between poetry and music was not, however, the work of a moment. It occupied more than an age in its discovery and perfection. The honour of the former belongs to Rinuccini, and Metastasio lays full claim to the latter. Rinuccini's first attempt consisted of little more than one of Ovid's metamorphoses thrown into dialogue. Apollo is exhibited in the act of wounding the serpent Python, while the nymphs and shepherds are seen in flight. Scornful in his victory, he ventures to taunt the god of Love, who takes his usual revenge. Smitten with Daphne's beauty, Apollo pursues her; she flies, and a shepherd soon after appears, who gives a relation of her metamorphosis. Such is this little drama, consisting of four choruses, divided into as many short acts, hardly amounting altogether to four hundred and fifty verses. The choruses are given in very easy couplets, which seem to be exquisitely adapted for music.† The

* He makes use of the same form of verse in dialogue, of which we may judge from the dispute between the two divinities of love and poetry, forming the ground-work of the action.

APOLLO. Dimmi, possente arciero,
Qual fera attendi, o qual serpente al varco
Ch' hai la faretra e l' arco?
AMORE. Se da quest' arco mio
Non fù Pitone ucciso,
Arcier non son però degno di riso,
E son del cielo, Apollo, un nume anch' io.
APOLLO. Sollo; ma quando scocchi
L' arco, sbendi tu gli occhi,
O ferisci a l' oscuro, arciero esperto?
VENERE. S' hai di saper desio
D' un cieco arcier le prove,
Chiedilo al Re de l' onde,
Chiedilo in cielo a Giove:
E trà l' ombre profonde
Del regno orrido oscuro
Chiedi, chiedi a Pluton s' ei fù sicuro?
APOLLO. Se in cielo, in mare, in terra,
Amor, trionfi in guerra,
Dove, dove m' ascondo?
Chi novo ciel m' insegna, o novo mondo?

† The last chorus, which terminates the piece, ends thus:

S' a fuggir movo le piante
Vero amante,
Contro amor cruda e superba,
Venir possa il mio crin d' aure
Non pur lauro,
Ma qual' è più miser erba.

Sia

remaining portion of the opera was probably altogether recitative, as we find no detached airs, duets, or pieces by several voices.

The *Euridice* of Rinuccini followed his *Daphne*, and was produced, likewise, by an union of talent with the same musicians. It was represented, for the first time, in 1600, on occasion of the nuptials of Mary de' Medici and Henry IV. He shortly after composed *Ariana*, the reception of which was no less brilliant. The success of the opera was thus complete; and every court eagerly followed the example held out by Florence. These first attempts were then brought to perfection. More lively action was given to the dramatic parts, and greater variety to the music, in which the airs were agreeably blended with the recitative. Duets and other harmonized pieces were also added; and, after the lapse of a century, Apostolo Zeno rose to carry it to as high a degree of perfection as it could possibly attain, before the spirit of a Metastasio breathed a soul of fire into the ingenious and happy form created by others.

Apostolo Zeno, of a Venetian family, originally from Candia, was born in the year 1669. Passionately devoted to the study of history, he was the first to introduce historical pieces into the scenes of the opera, instead of confining himself within the prescribed limits of mythology. The reputation of French tragedy had already begun to extend itself through Europe; and he often availed himself of some of its best pieces, as his models. Of sixty operas which he brought before the public, the most complete and successful were undoubtedly those in which he had imitated our best classics. Thus, the whole of the plot, the incidents, and the characters of his *Iphigenia* are bor-

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Sia vil canna il mio crin biondo,
Che l'immondo
Gregge ognor schianti e diramì;
Sia vil fien ch' ai crudi denti
De gli armenti
Tragga ognor l' avida fame.

Ma s' a preghi sospirosi
Amorosi
Di pietà sfavillo ed ardo,
S' io prometto a l' altrui pene
Dolce spene
Con un riso e con un

Non soffrir, cortese amore
Che 'l mio ardore
Prenda a scherno alma gelata;
Non soffrir ch'in piaggia o 'n lido
Cor infido
M' abbandoni innamorata.

Fà ch' al foco de' miei lumi
Si consumi
Ogni gelo, ogni durezza;
Ardi poi quest' alma allora,
Ch' altra adora
Qual si sia la mia bellezza.

rowed from Racine. in such a way as he thought best adapted to the opera. The language of the passions is throughout imbued with that solemn harmony, with which music so well accords, without, however, arriving at the vigour and brevity belonging to tragedy. The historical pieces which he produced, though by no means of a more effeminate or romantic character than those of Metastasio, are certainly a more extravagant burlesque of history. We feel that Metastasio could not have represented human nature otherwise than he does; whilst Zeno, who as constantly dwells upon the passion of love, is deficient in all that harmony, delicacy, and ardour, which, in the former, transport us out of ourselves.* Zeno, likewise, composed several comic operas, which appeared about the year 1597, coeval with those of a more serious kind. They were modelled upon the extemporaneous comedies already well known. In them the Harlequins, Columbines, and other masks of the Italian theatre, appear as the principal personages of the piece. But Zeno did not exhibit much talent in the comic opera, and this very amusing sort of national spectacle, to which Italy is indebted for much of her excellent music, has never hitherto been illustrated by any superior genius.

Apostolo Zeno was invited to Vienna by the Emperor

* We subjoin a few examples from one of his dramas, entitled *I due Dittatori*, founded upon the quarrel between the great Fabius Cunctator and M. Minutius, lieutenant of the horse, during the second Punic war. The passion of two captive princesses is, in Zeno's hands, the hidden source of all these grand events. Arisba, a Carthaginian captive, avails herself of her charms to sow dissension in the Roman camp, and congratulates herself, as follows, upon her success. *Act III. Scene* 8.

Colpì al segno lo stral: gittati ho i semi
Del civil odio. Vedrò in breve armarsi
Tribuni e Dittatori.
Qual gloria per Arisbe!
E se dirlo a me lece,
Forse Annibale ancor tanto non fece.
A l' uomo il sapere,
L' ardire, il potere
Natura donò.
E a noi che lasciò?
Astuzia, e beltà.
Ma il sesso più frale,
A senno, e possanza
Sovrasta, e prevale.

Si

Charles VI., where he was invested with the two very opposite employments, of imperial historiographer, and of poet laureat to the court opera. He lived to a very advanced age, dying in the middle of the last century, in 1750, at the age of eighty-one years, and having the mortification of beholding his reputation eclipsed in his old age by Metastasio.

The seventeenth century was remarkable, likewise, for its abundance of dramatic authors Innumerable tragedies, comedies, and pastorals, were every where recited before the different courts, and in the theatres, of Europe. Not any of these, however, were comparable to those of a former age, nor are they, indeed, to be placed in competition with those of the eighteenth century. The tragedies are singularly deficient in their delineation of characters and of manners; the style partakes of the inflated taste of the age, and the action flags; while the authors seem to have hesitated between the pedantic imitation of the ancients, and the mistaken route pursued by the moderns. Their productions are, perhaps, now worthy of mention, only as objects of literary research and curiosity; nor could they be represented or endured on any theatre, much less supply other writers with models or ideas in their future efforts. The poet's sole object was

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Se d' armi si forti
Valer ben si sà.

Being jealous of the son of Fabius, Minutius condemns him to death; while Fabius, out of regard to military discipline, is unwilling to oppose the sentence, but thus addresses his son as he is borne to punishment. *Act IV. Scene* 7.

So qual sono, e qual tu sei.
Tu i pietosi affetti miei,
E la patria avrà i più forti.
Dura invitto; e ad ogni età
In tua gloria passerà
La virtù che teco porti.

His son takes leave of the object of his affections, in the following air. *Act IV. Scene* 8.

Concedimi ch' io baci
Cara, la bianca mano,
Favor di tua pietade a l' amor mio.
Ma tu sospiri e taci:
Mi basta il tuo dolor; Ersilia addio.

In the verse of Zeno we certainly find the origin of that of Metastasio, but nothing of the spirit, sentiment and grace.

to surprise the spectator by the brilliancy of the scenery, or by a bustling movement of the stage, while probability was wholly sacrificed to the general desire of witnessing the appearance of monsters, combats, and processions of chariots and horses. The comedies were, in the same manner, unconnected, insipid, low, and appreciated only by the populace. The pastorals became more affected, unnatural, and dull; insomuch that the opera seemed the only species of theatrical representation at all esteemed, or which, indeed, deserved to be so.

It is with difficulty we can conceive how the very general corruption, which had introduced itself into every branch of literature, and palsied the powers of the human mind, was arrested in its progress. We should have expected that the false taste of the age would have inevitably produced a total neglect and cessation of mental cultivation; that in the pursuit of trifling and despicable objects, all nobler pursuits would have been abandoned; and that Italy would have again fallen under the leaden sceptre of corrupted taste, as she had before done for a whole age, succeeding that of Adrian. And it is highly probable, that if Italy had had to depend on her own resources, her national literature would have ceased to exist; for if we consult such of her authors as are in nothing indebted to the genius of other nations, we shall acknowledge them to be worthy disciples of the school of Marini and of Achillini. Nor is modern Italy, at this day, without abundance of sonnets which have not the least pretension to our notice, as destitute of thought or feeling as they are full of extravagance and false taste. To those writers who are acquainted only with their native language, all poetry appears to consist of images; extravagance is in their eyes beauty; while sonorous words, and superfluous epithets are substituted in the place of thought and meaning. But the example of the great poets of the age of Louis XIV. soon extended beyond the national barriers, into other countries; and the reputation of their works travelled beyond the Alps, towards the commencement of the eighteenth century. These masterpieces of literature were soon put in competition with the tasteless productions of the *Seicentisti*; and the result was favourable to the triumph of good taste. They were found to be more deeply imbued with the qualities of thought and

feeling, than native Italian verse; and, notwithstanding the jealousy of inquisitions, both political and religious, they brought along with them a spirit of inquiry, of which Italy stood so much in need. Europe was beginning to awaken out of her lethargy; nobler views were held out; and mankind began to aspire after greater and better things, connected with their improvement and happiness. Even Italy, in defiance of the efforts of princes and of prelates, exhibited some share of the growing energies which marked the opening of the eighteenth century. The first, and not the least happy result of the influence of the well known French writers, and of a few of the English just beginning to be read in Italy, was the reform which they introduced into the theatrical and poetical character, so totally destitute of propriety and taste. The poems of Frugoni, the dramas of Metastasio, and even the comedies of Goldoni, have all, more or less, a moral tendency; and if we, for a moment, contemplate the general degradation of the people, and the revolting license of their poets before these writers appeared, we must allow them to be entitled to no small degree of praise. Poetry once more restored to decency and to good feeling, was better enabled to plume her wings for more noble and lofty flights. The first effort of the most attractive of the sister arts, ought naturally to be to return to a purer and more moral atmosphere, if there be any truth in the assertion, that high thoughts have their origin in the heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—FRUGONI—METASTASIO.

THE close of the seventeenth century is rendered remarkable by the birth of Metastasio and of Frugoni, two men destined to revive the declining fame of Italian literature, in the succeeding age. Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni, one of the most distinguished of the modern lyric poets, was born at Genoa, on the twenty-first of November, 1692, of a noble family, whose name became extinct after his death. He was educated by the Jesuits, and compelled by his parents to

assume the religious habit at thirteen years of age. After many years of tedious suffering and anxiety, the Pope released him from his more strict and irksome vows, although Frugoni still remained a priest; cut off, by his profession, from more active life, and from all those domestic ties which the warmth of his heart and the activity of his mind would have naturally led him to embrace. Italy was then divided between the partizans of the affected and finical taste introduced by Marini, and those who, in opposition to this false standard, recommended only a servile imitation of the writers of the sixteenth century, or that of the classics, their earliest models. Frugoni rejected the opinions of both these parties; his genius suggested to him a bolder and far more original career. He devoted himself to the study of those poets who flourished in the ages scarcely emerged from barbarism. Without making use of them as models, he discovered in them examples of true greatness. He felt within himself the enthusiasm of soul capable of celebrating the fame of heroes, as it deserves to be celebrated, rather by the heart and the imagination, than by the memory; and he scorned the inferior talent, which reproduces only what has already been done.

Frugoni has treated in his poems, on a great variety of subjects. All passions, both human and divine, seem to have furnished him with materials for sonnets, canzoni, and lyrical effusions, in every kind of metre. But it is in the *versi sciolti*, or blank verse, that he more especially surpasses his predecessors, in the simplicity of his expressions, in the eloquent emotion that inspires him, and in the boldness of his poetry. But, perhaps, he may be justly reproached with having too frequently mingled science and polite literature together; his acquaintance with the more abtruse sciences being so very intimate and profound, that he not unfrequently borrowed his images wholly from these sources, and treated, in verse, subjects generally considered to be very unfit for poetry. No one, however, could have accomplished such a task with a greater degree of elegance, and with more brilliant and striking effect. It is not, indeed, uncommon, in Italy, thus to mingle science with poetry; where people of very slight attainments, hasten to display their knowledge on every fresh acquisition, as a man exhibits his newly acquired

riches. The farther we advance in civilization, the greater is the necessity we feel of giving to poetry more substantial materials of thought: and when enthusiasm no longer glows in the poem, we must seek to satisfy the judgment as well as the imagination. It is thus that the Italians, to whom true philosophy was as "a fountain sealed," have frequently substituted science in the place of reflection and thought. Celebrated *improvisatori* have been known to make the science of numbers, the properties of bodies, and even the anatomy of the human frame, objects of their serious study, that they might be better enabled to answer, in rhyme, any sort of questions which might be addressed to them.

Frugoni, as poet to the court of Parma, under the last of the Farnese, and the Bourbons who succeeded them, was appointed manager of the public spectacles; and was often occupied, in a most unworthy manner, in translating little pieces for the theatre, and in penning epithalamiums and occasional verses, upon subjects by no means congenial to his taste. He lived very luxuriously, however, at this court, being seldom without some love-intrigue, and passionately attached to the society of women to an advanced age; preserving, along with the passions, the fire and the imagination of youth. He died at Parma, at the age of sixty-six, on the twentieth of December, 1768. His reputation, however great, does not seem to have extended farther than Italy, from the circumstance of lyrical poetry being less susceptible of translation than any other kind, and less likely to be relished where the language is not thoroughly understood.

Frugoni owed his education to Gravina, a celebrated philosopher and jurisconsult of that age. Endowed with an exquisite taste and genius for letters, far greater, indeed, than we should imagine from the productions of his own muse, Gravina was, likewise, the instructor of Metastasio. If the reputation of the former of his pupils was confined within the bounds of Italy, that of the latter, however, extended over all Europe. We are at a loss to mention any author who wrote in a spirit more congenial to modern feelings and tastes, or one who has exercised greater influence in proportion to the eminence to which he was raised. Born at Rome, on the third day of January, 1698, he was early brought up to the trade of a goldsmith; but Gravina, who appreciated

his fine talents, took him to his own house, changing his name from Trapassi to the Greek translation of the same word, and hence he was called Metastasio. He took care, at the same time, to have him instructed in every branch of knowledge likely to facilitate his progress in the poetic art; and he encouraged his genius for extemporaneous effusions, which, by enlarging his powers of poetical language, enabled him to express the finest traits of sentiment and passion with equal grace and facility. In the mean time, Metastasio became attached to the style of composition by which he attained to such a height of celebrity. At the early age of fourteen, he wrote a tragedy, entitled *Justin*, which may be found among his works. It is, in truth, a very indifferent production; but the undertaking, of itself, does honour to so young a person. From that piece, it is clear that the genius of Metastasio was turned to the opera, and, indeed, his tragedy, in five acts, may be said to be an opera. The flow of the verse is extremely musical; and airs are introduced into his chorus, in the same manner as those inserted, at a later period, in his more finished productions. Gravina, afterwards, accompanied his pupil to Crotona, his native place, in the kingdom of Naples, that he might receive the instructions of Gregorio Caroprese, who had also been his own master in the Platonic philosophy. On his return to Rome, he died in the year 1718, leaving, by will, all his property, which was pretty considerable, to his pupil Metastasio.

For a century and a half, Italy had been unable to boast of her literary superiority; but, in producing Metastasio, nature seemed to have made her ample amends, as none of her writers ever more completely united all the qualities that constitute a poet; vivacity of imagination, and refinement of feeling, with every charm of versification and expression. Nor shall we easily find one who, by the mere force of his style, is entitled to be considered as a more graceful painter, or a more delightful musician. Metastasio made no pretensions, however, to the highest order of genius. He did not aim at those lofty and vigorous creations of the poet which excite our admiration by their sublimity. He wished to be the poet of the opera, and in this he succeeded; and confining himself to the path which he had chalked out, he surpassed the most distinguished writers of Italy, or, perhaps, of

any other nation. He very correctly appreciated the peculiar character of the theatre, to which he devoted his talents; and in a species of composition which has never conferred much reputation on any other poet, he has produced the most national poetry that Italy, perhaps, can boast of possessing, and which is most deeply impressed upon the memory and feelings of the people.

The object of tragedy, so differently explained by different critics, and as diversely understood by their readers, has, in reality, varied with the variations of time and place. With the ancients it was, in turn, religious, moral, or political; when, revealing the immutable laws and mysteries of fate, the poets sought to fortify exalted minds by an acquaintance with misfortune. It has consisted among the moderns, either in the simple display of deep emotions, or in the living picture of nature; or, founded upon a still more noble system, it comprises the worship of all that is most beautiful in the productions of the mind, and the admiration of art carried to its perfection, united to natural truth.

The opera could not boast so proud an origin. Taking its rise in the voluptuous courts of princes, it had none of the elements favourable to the growth of heroes. Its union of qualities was expected to yield every enjoyment, and the most pleasing emotions, by captivating, at the same moment, both the ear and the eye, and gratifying the tenderest affections of the soul. To ennoble pleasure, and to render it, in some degree, sacred, by the mixture of refined and elevated sentiment; and, if we are to look for political motives, to screen the prince from the shame of his own indolence and effeminacy, and to blind the people to every consideration but that of the passing moment; such would seem to have been the spirit of the Italian opera. And such it was, as it appeared in the courts of the Medici and the Farnese, and on the theatres of Venice, where voluptuousness was encouraged by the senate for interests of state. In this situation Metastasio found it, when he first entered upon his career; and without examining the effeminate character of this species of poetry, he eagerly followed the impulse of his feelings, which led him to adopt a refined sort of Epicurean doctrine, identifying every thing that was heroic, elevated, and pure, with the passion of love. His language was of that rich and im-

passioned nature, formed to carry to its most luxurious pitch a relish for all those pleasures of existence, derived from dancing, painting, and a species of poetry still more seductive than these, of which an audience so vividly feels the power. His predecessors, on the other hand, hesitating between an imitation of the Greek, the French, and even the Spanish dramatists, as well as of the pastoral poets of Italy, failed to discover the true laws of this kind of composition. Metastasio seized upon them with a daring hand, regardless of the indignation of pedantic critics. Scorning to subject himself to unity of place, he delighted in varying the scene, commanding a wider field for all that brilliant display of theatrical variety and effect, on which the charm of the opera so much depends. He had much more regard to the unity of time, without confining himself altogether within the limits prescribed, in such a way as to embrace as many incidents, processions, and ceremonies, within the four and twenty hours, as the good nature of the spectators could well admit. He submitted to regulate the unity of action by the circumstance of being obliged to bring forward two sets of personages, three male and three female lovers, upon the boards, to serve as the means of contrast to the musician. The catastrophe of his pieces is almost invariably happy ; as the languor of soul, consequent upon the music, would have been too much disturbed by very deep or painful emotions. He succeeded with unequalled skill, in combining natural expression with all the dignity and richness sought for in lyric poetry ; and he infused into the combination of his words and lines an irresistible harmony, which it is the boast of the sublime accompaniments of Pergolese, to have so faithfully and accurately preserved.

Metastasio composed no less than twenty-eight grand operas, besides many of a shorter kind, a number of *ballette*, and celebrations of festivals ; a species of dialogue intermixed with musical airs and recitative, and very frequently enlivened by a dramatic action. He borrowed his subjects almost indiscriminately from mythology or history, and brought upon the stage most of the different people and different countries, belonging to the ancient world. He is also indebted to Ariosto for one of his more romantic and chivalric pieces, entitled *Ruggiero*, which must be referred to

the period of the middle ages. It is to this very enlarged view of different countries, ages, and manners, that Metastatio owes all those ornamental varieties introduced into his lyric scenes, the very great diversity of decorations and costumes, and even that richness of local imagery, in which his poetry so much abounds. But he has not been so successful in variety of character, interests, and passions, as he might, perhaps, have been by more minute observation and analysis of nature and historic truth. Metastasio, carried away by his exquisite musical taste, sacrificed the higher objects of his art to the gratification of this feeling. Music, however well adapted to give expression to the passions, cannot so well serve to mark the different situations in a piece; and the science would only be rendered ridiculous, by being made to assume a character expressive of the different manners and language of each people. We should feel disgusted at hearing barbarism celebrated in wild and savage strains; or if, in singing of love, it were attempted also to convey an idea of the pride of the Romans, and the despotism of the Orientals. Aware, in some degree, of this uniformity in music, Metastasio did not attempt to follow his heroes to Rome, or into the East. Whatever names or whatever dresses he bestows upon them, they are invariably characters of the same stamp, whose manners and whose passions have a strong resemblance, and whose scene of action is always the lyric theatre. Such manners, having no prototypes in any nation, seem, singularly enough, to be formed out of the pastoral and romantic elements of another age. Love is, indeed, the animating principle of all these dramas; it is every where irresistible, and the immediate motive to every action. The other passions, however, are gifted with the same refined and imaginary qualities; and we behold patriotism, liberty, loyalty, filial love, and chivalric honour, all carried, by the poet, to the same extremes. There are sentiments with which the world acknowledges no sympathy; a degree of devotedness which no virtue requires; and on the other hand, examples of baseness and perfidy, which, we rejoice to reflect, are no longer real. The whole of Metastasio's plays exhibit the same opposition of interests between our passions and our duty, or between two contending principles of duty, always under the same

ideal character. The plot is throughout ravelled by the perfidy of some rival, or by that of an inferior agent, who is purposely drawn in very dark colours, and on whom the whole odium of the mischief is made to rest; while the contrast to such a character is gifted with all the perfections in the poet's power to bestow. The intrigue is brought to light either by some very magnanimous effort of virtue, or by an unsuccessful attempt to execute some diabolical project, and the drama almost always closes in a happy manner. If, indeed, any personage perishes, he is one, at least, who has richly merited his fate.

The sameness of manners, extravagance of character, and invariably happy catastrophes, produce, it must be allowed, a feeling of monotony in Metastasio's plays. One piece conveys too complete an idea of all that remain; and, when we have once familiarized ourselves with the author's manner, we may pretty accurately divine, as soon as the overture of each begins, what will be the nature of the plot, and what its disclosure. If, however, we have the candour to keep in view, that Metastasio was the poet of the opera; that the emotions he wished to excite were all in reference to music, and were never intended to leave violent or painful impressions on the mind; we shall cease to reproach him for his voluptuous tenderness and effeminacy, for the ideal beauty of his sentiments, and even for the invariably happy termination of his pieces. We perceive that these defects were inherent in the nature of the subject, and not in the poet who treated it; and we, also, feel sensible that he carried his art to its highest degree of perfection. His dramas invariably open with striking and imposing effect, and are full of magnificence and attractions, calculated to rivet the attention of the audience. He gives a very simple exposition of the most intricate action, and brings the spectators, without much preface, into the most interesting situations it affords. In the inventing and varying of these, he displays the greatest skill; and no one knew better than Metastasio, how to create in others an impassioned interest in his subject, by the manner of weaving his plot. The language in which he clothes the darling passion of his drama, has in it all that is most delicate and impassioned in love. He developes, with a surprising air of reality, the most elevated sentiments

attached to loyalty, filial love, and the love of our country, to all of which he attributes ideal excellences, both in action and in character. We must add that the flow of his verse in the recitative, is, altogether, the most pure and harmonious known in any language; and that the airs or strophes, at the close of the different scenes, breathe a fine lyric spirit, and a richness of poetical expression not surpassed by the very first masters in the art. In conclusion, the adaptation of the sentiment to the musical accompaniment is every where so justly observed, that not an image or an expression is held out to the musician, which is not naturally adapted to harmonic developement, and in itself essentially harmonious.

Yet we dare hardly venture, like many of the Italians, to consider Metastasio in the character of a tragedian; nor ought he to be held out as a model to other nations, in any species of composition, but that of the opera. His poetry must not be divested, for a moment, of its musical attractions; nor ought it to be put into the mouth of tragic actors, as is too often the case, at present, in Italy. It makes no pretensions to real tragedy; and if placed in competition with that, to which it cannot, in justice, be compared, we should, doubtless, be compelled to admit its improbabilities, its want of consistency, and the effeminacy of the manners, which it depicts. Viewed in this light, the musical drama is confessedly inferior. We feel that the object of tragedy is to call forth the most powerful emotions, by pictures of human fate and wretchedness; and we know that no feelings can be thus deep and powerful, which are not essentially founded in nature and in truth. It is the duty of the tragic poet to transport us at once into the very place he has chosen, to make us the witness of some terrific action. Here we expect to find places, manners, prejudices, and passions, every thing in union together, as a consistent whole. We must be made to breathe, as it were, the very atmosphere, glowing with the words and spirit of the heroes, contending with their destiny around us. This was the triumph of the Greek theatre; and this the Germans have also succeeded in effecting. The grand failure of the French tragedians, as it has generally been supposed, was in giving to all the great personages of antiquity, the precise language and sentiments of their own countrymen. They were doubtless wrong, but this error by no means

approaches in importance to that of having produced mere ideal characters. We can indulge in some degree of sympathy for the former, in whom, as soon as we forget their names, a living truth of character appears; but the latter we are unable to comprehend, inasmuch as they are without a prototype in nature.

In order to convey as correct an idea of the drama of Metastasio, by means of specimens and translations, as it lies in my power to do, I propose to give, in the first place, a minute analysis of one of his most finished pieces. It is entitled *Hypsipyle;* and it may serve to explain the fabric of the Italian opera, in its varieties of incident and character. We could not proceed to try that succession of very brilliant and striking situations, and of novel events, with which the poet has crowded his drama, by any severe and critical standard, without speedily detecting the glaring improbability and the want of skill apparent throughout his whole composition. The analysis we now propose, and which may appear somewhat invidious, it will, therefore, be superfluous to repeat in other instances, which would merely present us with the same defects; and we shall endeavour to present our readers only with what we find most beautiful in the rest of his dramas.

The play of *Hypsipyle* is, perhaps, one of the most poetical. It combines more of a romantic interest; and as the danger, to which the leading characters are exposed, is very well supported, it, for this reason, keeps alive the anxiety and attention of the spectators. The versification is, likewise, very superior to most of the same class, and the dialogue is, by turns, equally touching, eloquent, and impassioned. To enjoy it, as we ought, we must create for ourselves an illusion, which may serve to disguise the many improbabilities of facts and character; and, abandoning ourselves to its impulses, we must wander through an ideal world where every thing is new, and where even moral laws take their source in other principles.

The scene of *Hypsipyle* is placed in Lemnos. The theatre represents the temple of Bacchus, whose rites are about to be celebrated. Hypsipyle appears with her confidant Rhodope, armed in the character of Bacchantes. The fatal oath, engaging her to a frightful conspiracy of the Lemnian women,

has just passed her lips. It is to massacre the whole Lemnian army, on the eve of its return from a long expedition into Thrace. The princess, who had only feigned to approve of the plot, commands Rhodope to hasten towards the shore, to prevent, if possible, her father, King Thoas, from disembarking; but it is too late, and Eurynome, one of the most desperate Bacchantes, who originated the project of assassinating all their brothers and husbands, announces the arrival of Thoas. She stirs up the fury of the Bacchantes, by exciting their jealousy, and gives final orders for the massacre, which is to be executed during the night. Hypsipyle encourages it, and seems, by her language, more ferocious than Eurynome herself. We look in vain for a motive to this dissimulation, which only favours the projects of Eurynome, and ends in the death of the unfortunate Lemnians; whilst the measures taken by Hypsipyle to save her father are unaccountable; as she waits for the landing of Thoas, before she thinks of entrusting the young princess, her confidant, with the care of detaining him in the port. The speech of Eurynome is certainly very beautiful. It has the twofold merit of expressing the eloquent feeling of the moment, and of explaining to the spectator the motives and the mysteries of this strange conspiracy, in such a manner as to give them at least an air of probability.

Most noble Princess, (*To Rhodope*)
And you, brave comrades of our enterprize,
Lo! from the Thraeian shores once more returning,
The faithless Lemnians claim their native soil.
But, be it ours to visit their offences
With vengeance due. True, they return, but how?
Have not three summer suns
Witness'd our harvest toils*

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* Eurinome.
Rodope, Principessa,
Valorose compagne, a queste arene
Dalle sponde di Tracia, a noi ritorno
Fanno i Lenni infedeli. A noi s' aspetta
Del sesso vilipeso
L' oltraggio vendicar. Tornan gl' ingrati,
Ma dopo aver tre volte
Viste da noi lontano
Le messi rinnovar. Tornano a noi,
Ma ci portan sugli occhi

De'

Neglected and unaided? Now they come
To give the offspring of their stolen embraces
Into your laps; while each barbarian mistress,
Wild as the savage beast, whose milk she drew,
With painted visage mocks your slighted charms.
Revenge, revenge our wrongs!
We have vow'd it, and our vow must be fulfill'd.
Fortune looks smiling on,
And favouring night her curtain lends
To shield our enterprise. While the glad god,
Whose noisy rites we celebrate,
With joyous songs shall drown their feeble cries.
Let fathers, sons, and brothers,
And falsest consorts, in one fate be buried.
For us, be ours the glory or the blame;
A proud example to the ingrate race
Of woman's wrath, for violated faith.

Thoas arrives with his Lemnians; but Hypsipyle ventures not to return his caresses. Full of grief, she beholds him surrounded by his soldiers; a word from his daughter's mouth would save him and his valiant companions from an ignominious death, by an open combat with the women, which could not long be doubtful. There is, moreover, nothing to excuse the whimsical indignation of the Lemnian ladies. The character of Thoas has all the qualities of manly prudence, kindness, and protection. The language given him by the poet attracts us by the paternal affection it displays; but a

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De' talami furtivi i frutti infami;
E le barbare amiche
Dipinte il volto, e di ferigno latte
Avezzate a nutrirsi, adesso altere
Della vostra beltà vinta e negletta.
Ah vendetta, vendetta!
La giurammo; s' adempia. Al gran disegno
Tutto cospira, l' opportuna notte,
La stanchezza de' rei, del Dio di Nasso
Il rito strepitoso, onde confuse
Fian le querule voci
Fra le grida festive. I padri, i figli,
I germani, i consorti
Cadano estinti; e sia fra noi commune
Il merito ò la colpa. Il grande esempio
De' femminili sdegni,
Al sesso ingrato a serbar fede insegni.
Atto I. Sc. 2.

different character would have thrown a greater air of probability over the conspiracy of which he is made the victim.

THOAS. Long loved, and loved in vain,
Come to a father's arms, my child, my daughter.
I cannot tell how sad and wearily
The weight of my long years has on me press'd,
Since thus I fondly held you to my breast.
Now you again are near me; now I feel
The burden of my years sit light and easy
Upon an old man's head.
HYPSIP. My heart will break. (*Aside.*)
THOAS. But why so sad and silent,
My only girl? and why so strangely cold—
A father just restored?
HYPSIP. Alas! you know not,
My Lord—
ROD. Ah, silence! (*To Issipile.*)
HYPSIP. Ye gods, what torture! (*Aside.*)
EURIN. Her weakness will betray me! (*Aside.*)
THOAS. And is it my return
That grieves you thus?
HYPSIP. Would you could read my heart!
THOAS. Nay, tell me all!
HYPSIP Ye gods!*

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* TOANTE.
Vieni, O dolce mia cura,
Vieni al paterno sen: da te lontano,
Tutto degli anni miei sentiva il peso;
E tutto, o figlia, io sento
Or che appresso mi sei
Il peso alleggerir degli anni miei.
ISSIP. (Mi si divide il cor.)
TOANTE. Perchè ritrovo
Issipile si mesta?
Qual mai freddezza è questa
All' arrivo d' un padre?
ISSIP. Ah tu non sai . . .
Signor . . .
ROD. Taci
ISSIP. (Che pena!)
EURIN. (Ah, mi tradisce
La debolezza sua!)
TOANTE. La mia presenza
Ti funesta così?
ISSIP. Non vedi il core;
Perciò . . .
TOANTE. Spiegati.
ISSIP. Oh Dio!

TOANTE.

THOAS What is't that moves you? Speak!
Can th' hymeneal rites, which the young prince
Hastens from Thessaly to celebrate,
Displease my daughter?
HYPSIP. No, sire; from the moment
I saw him first, I loved him.
THOAS. Can it be
You fear to lose the power my absence gave you?
Fear not. No longer sovereign prince or king
Am I. Still govern at your pleasure here,
Reward, and punish.—No desire have I,
But here to live, and in your arms to die.

In the meanwhile, Thoas and the Lemnians retire to rest, and Hypsipyle repeats her promise to assassinate her father. Eurynome now unfolds the cause of her desperate attempt. Her object is to avenge her son Learchus, who having made an attempt to carry off Hypsipyle, had been banished by Thoas, and was believed to have died in exile. Eurynome next hastens to give orders for beginning the massacre; but at the moment she disappears, Learchus enters upon the scene, where he meets Rhodope, who had formerly bestowed her affections upon him. She eagerly beseeches him to fly from a place where every man is doomed to destruction. Learchus will not be persuaded to believe her. As the captain of a band of pirates, he has entered Lemnos for the purpose of preventing the nuptials of Jason, the prince of Thessaly, who is every moment expected to lead Hypsipyle to the altar. Learchus introduces himself into the palace gardens, whither Hypsipyle, in a short time, conducts her father, for the pur-

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TOANTE. Spiegati, O figlia;
Se l' imeneo ti spiace
Del prence di Tessaglia
Che a momenti verrà . . .
ISSIP. Dal primo istante
Che il vidi l' adorai.
TOANTE. Forse in mia vece
Avvezzata a regnar, temi che sia
Termine di tuo regno il mio ritorno?
T' inganni. Io quì non sono
Più sovrano nè Rè. Punisci, assolvi,
Ordina premi e pene: altro non bramo,
Issipile adorata!
Che viver teco, e che morirti accanto.

Atto I. Sc. 3

pose of concealing him from the fury of the Bacchantes. Their conversation is overheard by Learchus, who finds that Rhodope had not deceived him. He now seeks to draw away Thoas by a stratagem, and to appear in his place, with the view of carrying off Hypsipyle, who had retired, as soon as she returns to seek her father. In fact, he addresses himself to Thoas, entreating him, for his daughter's sake, to conceal himself elsewhere, assuring him that his retreat is already discovered; and, on Thoas retiring, he himself enters the thicket in his stead.

The scene is afterwards changed. Eurynome announces to her infatuated countrywomen, who are assembled in the Temple of Vengeance, that an armed man had been observed in the precincts of the palace; "but the Lemnian heroines," she continues, "have surrounded him, and, I doubt not, will soon prove victorious." It was Jason; and the next moment he appears, sword in hand, pursuing the Lemnian ladies, whom he had completely put to the rout. He is astonished to find Eurynome and Hypsipyle busily employed in organizing these Amazonian culprits. He, nevertheless, accosts his betrothed bride in the most affecting and impassioned language; and is received with no less tenderness on her part. But his surprise is changed into horror, when he hears of the slaughter, which has just taken place, of all the Lemnians, and of the assassination of the king by the hands of his own adored and beautiful bride. Hypsipyle, herself, confirms a recital, which in the eyes of her lover overwhelms her with disgrace. She had even taken the precaution to place a disfigured corpse upon the couch of Thoas, in order to deceive the conspirators. Jason hastens from this scene of blood, disgusted at the unnatural wickedness of the bride, whom he had flown to embrace.

The second act opens with the appearance of Eurynome during the night in the palace gardens, where Hypsipyle has concealed her father.

EUR. Alas! whichever way I turn,
Some fatal object meets my eyes,
Kindling again my passions into madness.*

* EUR. Ah! che per tutto io veggo
Qualche oggetto funesto
Che rinfaccia a quest' alma i suoi furori!

'Mi ist these deep solitudes
I strive to lose the dread remorse,
Which still, where'er I fly, intrudes.
Tell me, ye awful scenes !
The spirit of my boy no longer wanders
Sad, unavenged, on the Lethean strand;
That now his mournful shade may pass the wave,
And taste the rest his mother's vengeance gave.

The son, to whom she here appeals, is at her side in the same retreat; but this piratical chief is, in truth, more cowardly than a woman. He shews himself with the utmost fear, and retreats again at the least noise. His voice increases the anguish of Eurynome, who recognizes that of her son. Hypsipyle now arrives to withdraw her father from the place of his retreat; and she informs Learchus, whom she mistakes for Thoas, of the preparations she had made for flight. Eurynome, hearing her intention, hastens to summon the Bacchantes; while Learchus, alarmed at the sudden flash of lights, makes his escape before he can be discovered. Eurynome gives orders for the grove to be surrounded by the Bacchanals; and for the retreats on all sides to be explored and set fire to; when, just at the moment she expects to stab Thoas with her own hand, Learchus is brought forward, and falls at her feet. This incident possesses theatrical effect, which might be considered as striking, had Metastasio employed it less frequently. The Bacchantes are supposed to insist upon the king's death; but they, in reality, say nothing; whilst Rhodope, still in love with Learchus, comes forward, under pretence of hastening his punishment, with the intention of saving his life. She contrives to lead Eurynome away, and orders her companions to make preparations for the public sacrifice; remaining, unaccompanied, to keep guard over Learchus. As soon, however, as the women have departed, she restores him to liberty. If the Lemnian ladies were to be thus easily imposed upon, surely Hypsipyle needed not to have invented so many unreasonable and fatal artifices.

Voi, solitari orrori,
Da' seguaci rimorsi
Difendete il mio cor. Ditemi voi
Che per me più non erra invendicata
L'ombra del figlio mio; che più di Lete
Non sospira il tragitto;
E che val la sua pace il mio delitto.

The scene again changes; and Jason is seen, at sunrise, on the seashore, at a little distance from his slumbering companions in arms. After a monologue, in which he reproaches Hypsipyle for her perfidy and cruelty, wearied with long watching, he falls asleep upon the ground. Learchus here approaches him, and beholds his rival at his feet, unarmed and alone. He draws his dagger to despatch him, when Hypsipyle, suddenly arriving, arrests the blow, threatening to alarm Jason. She obliges him to deliver up his arms; but Learchus is revenged upon her by himself awakening Jason, and crying out that he is betrayed. The Thessalian prince starts up; beholds Hypsipyle with a dagger in her hand, and doubts not for a moment, that she, who had assassinated her father, is now aiming at her lover's life. In vain she attempts to exculpate herself, and to inform him of the truth; Jason appears to listen to her with horror, and rejects her caresses with disgust. She is scarcely gone, before Thoas, approaching Jason, convinces him, by his appearance and conversation, of the entire innocence of Hypsipyle. Jason immediately rouses his companions. He swears to snatch Hypsipyle from the palace, and from the power of these furies; to solicit her forgiveness, and to take vengeance for the blood which the Lemnian women have shed.

In the beginning of the third act, we have the prospect of a solitary place, not far from the seashore, where Learchus is lying in ambuscade, together with two of his piratical followers. Thoas, whose anxiety has drawn him out of the tents of Jason, is approaching near; but Learchus, with his two followers, judging himself no match for the old king, despatches his comrades for more assistance, while he attempts to amuse Thoas until their return. He pretends to make a confession, and to entreat the king's forgiveness of his crimes; and on receiving pardon, he takes his hand in token of reconciliation. The next moment Thoas is surrounded by the pirates; and Learchus suddenly changing his tone, calls on him to surrender. Such are these variations of fortune, called by the Italians, *di bei colpi di scena;* fine theatrical strokes; and which are of much the same nature in the action of a piece, as the *concetti* in regard to style. In truth, the language made use of in these surprising turns, is imbued with many of the same defects: we have enough

of spirit and of elevation of manner, but nothing natural and true. They are followed by the plaudits of the theatre; we admire and we recur to them; but the frequent antitheses give them a peculiar air of affectation. Thus Learchus says to the king, who despises life:

LEAR. Nay, these are dreams!
There is no thing so vile
But loves to live. 'Tis a deceitful wile,
A tale told only to the idiot throng,
Of heroes' hearts firm amidst utter woe;
And thine (I read thy soul) is trembling now.*

The reply of Thoas is almost a parody of the preceding passage.

THOAS. Are they dreams?
I know thou canst not be at peace;
For virtue with ourselves is born,
Whose love, though spurn'd, deserts us never;
And whips those faults, from which it fails to shield us.
It is Heaven's voice! and if we hear it not,
Woe to us; for the very worst of evils
Is when the sinner bears within his heart
The longing after good, the sense of right,
Even in his own despite.
I read thy soul, and know ev'n now it trembles.

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* LEARCO. Fole son queste.
Ogni animal che vive
Ama di conservarsi; arte che inganna
Solo il credulo volgo, è la fermezza
Che affetano gli eroi ne' casi estremi.
Io ti leggo nell' alma e so che tremi.
. . . . . .

TOANTE. Fole son queste?
Tranquillo esser non puoi;
So che nasce con noi
L' amor della virtù. Quando non basta
Ad evitar le colpe,
Basta almeno a punirle. E' un don del cielo
Che diventa castigo
Per chi ne abusa. Il più crudel tormento
Ch' hanno i malvagi, è il conservar nel core
Ancora a lor dispetto,
L' idea del giusto, e dell' onesto i semi.
Io ti leggo nell' alma, e so che tremi.

Atto III. Sc. 1.

In the mean while Rhodope, who saw Thoas borne away by the pirates, and Hypsipyle, informed of the fact, have recourse to Jason's assistance, and excite him to vengeance. The scene is altered; and we behold the sea-port, where the ships of Learchus are at anchor. Learchus, with the captive Thoas, is already on board; while Jason, Hypsipyle, and Rhodope appear in pursuit of them with the Argonauts. Jason wishes instantly to attack the ships of the enemy; but Learchus, standing upon the deck, threatens to despatch Thoas with the weapon which he holds suspended over the old man's head. He refuses to restore his prisoner until Hypsipyle shall surrender herself into his hands. This, Hypsipyle, notwithstanding her own fears, and the opposition of Thoas and of Jason, resolves to do; and slowly approaches the pirate's vessel. Jason then observes Eurynome, who is in search of her son Learchus; and seizing her, he threatens to kill her, unless Thoas is set at liberty. The two victims are trembling under the knives of their respective assassins, on each side of the stage. When this spectacle has been exhibited a sufficient time, Learchus yields, and agrees to exchange Thoas for his mother; and, as if to carry the improbability of all this to its highest point, after expressing remorse, and reproaching himself for this act of virtue, he stabs himself, for the weakness he has shown, and throws himself into the sea.

Few dramas exhibit greater study of theatrical effect than *Hypsipyle;* and, if we except its total want of probability, without requiring of the author to account in a natural manner for the incidents introduced, few, perhaps, will be found that possess a greater degree of interest. But the same theatrical surprises are repeated, until they weary the patience of his audience. We see the dagger at the throat of a father, a mother, a son, or a beauty; and the same laconic reply is given to all the finest speeches in the piece, *vieni o l' uccido:* Approach! or he dies. We have, also, convenient liberators, with the weapons which they have just snatched from the real assassins in their hands, and who are themselves accused of the crime; and mothers, who persuading themselves that they are in pursuit of their worst enemy, find an only son in his place; but not until they have brought him into the extremest jeopardy. Such materials

are the common property of Italian tragedy. The incidents and characters are all ready drawn out, and the situations capable of being transferred elsewhere without distinction of time or place; thus rendering the drama of modern Italy so easy a production, that every troop of players makes a point of entertaining its own poet; and we are assured that more than a single specimen of the serious opera has really proceeded from the pen of a shoemaker. Metastasio's characters are, likewise, brought upon the scene, with more tedious repetition than even the incidents and situations of his pieces. A total want of national interest, and too great exaggeration of the different virtues and vices of the personages he displays, admit of little variety in the poet's characters. We are never presented with any of those half-villains, or half-virtuous people so frequently met with elsewhere. The author takes it for granted, that one vice is followed by all the rest in the decalogue, and that it is impossible for a virtuous character to commit a single fault; insomuch that he equally fails to excite our sympathy in the transcendent villains, and in those immaculate characters, who invariably triumph over their passions, after the struggle of a moment. We shall perceive, in treating of the Italian comedy, the same resemblance between the different masks, and the uniform manner in which Pantaloon, Harlequin, and Columbine are made to support the same character, in all the comedies in which they appear. They are, indeed, the same persons, placed in different circumstances, as best suits the convenience of the author. The more serious Italian opera was framed upon a similar model. It admits only of a limited number of masks upon the scene, each of which is the original type and essence of a fixed and stated character: such as that of the tyrant, the good king, the hot-headed hero, the plaintive lover, and the faithful friend. On these personages the author invariably confers foreign names and dresses, while he gives them no other characteristics of the nation to which they belong. We have a Greek, a Roman, a Persian, or a Scythian; but if their individual costume were changed, the dramatic action attributed to each would be quite as suitable to the inhabitants of the opposite end of the world.

Metastasio began his career by a piece entitled *Dido*

abandoned by Æneas, founded upon no very favourable subject; out of which he failed to elicit the degree of interest of which it might have been rendered susceptible. The Æneas whom he holds out as his hero, is a disgusting character; but the charm of the versification, even in this first attempt, had the effect of raising him far above his competitors. This favourable impression was increased by his succeeding efforts; and in 1729, his reputation procured for him an order from the Emperor Charles VI. to attend, as Imperial poet, at Vienna, to replace Apostolo Zeno, who now wished to retire to Venice. There Metastasio continued to reside, in the service of the court, till an advanced old age. He died on the twelfth day of April, 1782, in his eighty-fourth year. Nine of his pieces, which were composed during the first ten years of his residence at Vienna, are held in much higher estimation than the remainder. These consist of his *Issipile*, *Olimpiade*, *Demofoonte*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Achille*, *Ciro*, *Temistocle*, *Zenobia*, and *Regolo*. Of a few of these we propose to give some account, as well with a view to their general merits, as to the more particular excellences which they display, but we shall avoid repeating the irksome task of following them scene by scene.

The *Olimpiade* is of a soft and impassioned character throughout; the style extremely pure; with little probability of incident, and little nature except in the passion of love. The scene is placed amidst the Olympic games, where the poet supposes Clisthenes, king of Sicyon, to preside. The king has given his daughter Aristea as a prize to the victor in the wrestling-match. There are two friends, Lycidas and Megacles, in love with Aristea, the former of whom has had no experience in the Olympic combats, while the latter has frequently been victorious in the wrestling ring. Lycidas had formerly saved the life of Megacles, who now wishes to enter the arena, and to win the disputed beauty for his friend, and in his friend's name. A similar situation of the characters is introduced in another of Metastasio's pieces, founded on chivalric manners, and borrowed from Ariosto, under the name of Ruggiero and Bradamante. Megacles disguises from his friend the passion which he entertains for the fair Aristea; he enters the lists, is victorious over all competitors, and yielding the prize into the arms of his friend, precipitates

himself into the river, to avoid seeing the object of his passion in the embraces of another. The catastrophe is, nevertheless, brought about favourably for all parties. A fisherman snatches Megacles from the waves; Argene, formerly deserted by Lycidas, inspires him with renewed passion while present at the games; and Lycidas is finally discovered to be the son of Clisthenes, and brother to Aristea. As hope can no longer be here indulged, the two pair of lovers are united agreeably to the dictates of their first passion.

The *Olimpiade* appears to me to excel all the other pieces of which Metastasio can boast, in point of impassioned eloquence. In the scene between Megacles and Aristea, in which he acquaints her with his triumph, but that he has triumphed for another instead of himself, and in which he offers the sacrifice of both at the shrine of friendship, the interest assumes a high and pathetic tone. The farewell of Megacles to the object of his love and to his friend, is expressed in the most eloquent and impassioned language, the close of which falls into a sweet air, to which Cimarosa has given an effect beyond the power of mere human words to produce. Music appears to have lavished upon it the utmost tenderness of which the art is susceptible, and expresses the most delicate varieties and shades of feeling with an eloquence of which words can convey but a faint impression. The quatrain with which the air closes: *Che abisso di pene:* is a burst of grief which opens the innermost recesses of the bosom to a feeling of despair.

It would be quite impossible to convey an idea in feeble prose, of the united effect of the finest poetry and music. But we must, at least, attempt to catch a portion of the thoughts and sentiments thus exquisitely embodied, were it only to exhibit the powers of Metastasio, as a faithful and natural delineator of passion.

MEG. This is the mystery—
You know the secret now—the Prince of Crete
Dies to possess you. He implores my pity;
He saved my life. How can I spurn his prayer?

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* MEG. Tutto l'arcano
Ecco ti svelo. Il principe di Creta
Langue per te d' amor. Pietà mi chiede.
E la vita mi diede. Ah! principessa,
Se negarla poss' io, dillo tu stessa. ARIST.

ARIST. You fought—
MEG. It was for him.
ARIST. Ah! would you lose me?
MEG. Yes! to preserve my honour, and remain
Still worthy of your love.
ARIST. And I must therefore—
MEG. Crown the great work, most generous, most adored.
O, Aristea, help the grateful throbs
Of my torn heart, and be to Lycidas
All thou hast been to me. Yes, love him, love him!
He is deserving of such infinite bliss:
We have been one in heart;
If thou art his, we do not wholly part.
ARIST. What have you said? Am I, indeed, so fallen
From my bright heaven of hopes, to the abyss
Of wretchedness? It cannot be. No! find him
Some nobler recompense; for without you
Life is not life.
MEG. Yet must I say adieu.
Do not thou also, beauteous Aristea,
Tempt me to be a traitor to my virtue.
Too dreadful are the pangs of this resolve;
And now the least of these sweet fond emotions
Makes all my efforts vain.
ARIST. Alas! you leave me—

ARIST. E pugnasti—
MEG. Per lui.
ARIST. Perder mi vuoi—
MEG. Sì, per serbarmi sempre
Degno di te.
ARIST. Dunque io dovrò—
MEG. Tu dei
Coronar l' opra mia. Sì, generosa,
Adorata Aristea, seconda i moti
D' un grato cor. Sia qual io fui fin ora,
Licida in avvenire. Amalo. E degno
Di sì gran sorte il caro amico. Anch' io
Vivo di lui nel seno;
E s' ei t' acquista, io non ti perdo appieno.
ARIST. Ah, qual passaggio è questo! Io dalle stelle
Precipito agli abissi. Ah, no; si cerchi
Miglior compenso. Ah! senza te la vita
Per me vita non è.
MEG. Bella Aristea,
Non congiurar tu ancora
Contro la mia virtù. Mi costa assai
Il prepararmi a sì gran passo. Un solo
Di quei teneri sensi
Quant' opera distrugge!
ARIST. E di lasciarmi—

MEG.

MEG. It is too true.
ARIST. True, dost thou say? and when?
MEG. This, this, ('tis worse than death to utter it,)
This is my last farewell.
ARIST. The last! Ungrateful!
Help me, ye gods—I sink into the earth;
Cold damps are on my brow; I feel a nand,
A chilly hand oppress my very heart.
. . . . . .
MEG. Mc miserable! what do I behold?
Her grief hath killed her. Gentle love, look on me!
Do not, bright Aristea, thus yield up
Thy nobler self. Hear! Megacles is with thee;
I will not leave thee. Ah! she does not heed me.
Are there more woes in store for me, ye gods?
Farewell, farewell, for ever.
And may the Fates be kinder
To thee, love, than to me!
Ye gods, preserve your noblest work below.
And the bright days I lose, on her bestow!
My Lycidas, O hear:
My fate would she discover,
And say: Where is he fled?
Then answer thou: Thy lover,
Thine hapless friend, is dead.

MEG. Ho risoluto.
ARIST. Hai risoluto? e quando?
MEG. Questo (morir mi sento)
Questo è l'ultimo addìo.
ARIST. L'ultimo! ingrato—
Soccorretemi, o Numi! il piè vacilla:
Freddo sudor mi bagna il volto; e parmi
Ch' una gelida man m' opprima il core.
. . . . . .
MEG. Misero me, che veggo!
Ah, l' oppresse il dolor! Cara mia speme,
Bella Aristea, non avvilirti; ascolta:
Megacle è qui, non partirò. Sarai—
Che parlo? Ella non m' ode. Avete, o stelle,
Più sventure per me?—
—Addìo, mia vita; addìo,
Mia perduta speranza. Il ciel ti renda
Più felice di me. Deh! conservate
Questa bell' opra vostra, eterni Dei,
E i dì ch' io perderò, donate a lei.
——Licida, ah senti.
Se cerca, se dice:
L' amico dov' è?
L' amico infelice,
Rispondi, morì.

Ah!

Yet no ! a grief so bitter
She shall not feel. Oh say,
He sorely wept to quit her,
And weeping, went his way.
O mighty gulf of woe !
To leave my love, my heart !
For evermore to part !
To part, and leave her so.

We discern, likewise, in the *Olimpiade*, an attempt to give a more distinct expression to the characters of the piece. Lycidas is not altogether, like the others, a perfect hero ; but gives signs of impatience and presumption, peculiar to himself. Strength of character may, however, be considered as a superfluous quality in most operas ; for the events are so far out of the reach of the influence of the personages engaged in them, that did they assume a character quite opposite to that assigned to them, the result would be precisely the same. It is probably true, that, by this character of Lycidas, Metastasio wished to explain his last rash action. He rushes, like a madman, into the temple, attacks the king, and is about to kill him, when he feels himself restrained by a sudden feeling of respect, and by a sort of supernatural presentiment of his birth, frequently dignified by the name of the voice of nature, but, in fact, more nearly resembling the voice of the theatre, or the voice of romance. The whole of the conduct attributed to Lycidas is, nevertheless, quite inexplicable, and his indignation as much so as his respect. But it was convenient to the author, as the source of one of those grand *colpi di scena*, or dramatic surprises, so much applauded by the people of Italy. The king condemns Lycidas to death, while he is full of compassion for his victim ; and every thing is prepared for his execution, when he recognizes him as his own son. Then, with an excess of magnanimity, as

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Ah ! no ! si gran duolo
Non darle per me :
Rispondi, ma solo ;
Piangendo partì.
Che abisso di pene !
Lasciare il suo bene
Lasciarlo per sempre,
Lasciarlo così !

Olimpiade, Atto I' Sc. 2.

little agreeable to reason as to sound morality, the king declares :

> And shall I dare to say the path of crime
> Is open to my race? Each one of you
> Hath proved his virtue, and shall I alone
> Be feeble in the contest? This, of me,
> The world shall never hear. Upon your altars
> Kindle, ye priests, the sacred fire!
> And thou, my son, go forth, and die!
> Soon to be follow'd by thy wretched sire.*

The fatal order is, however, deferred, on a representation being made to his Majesty that he is, indeed, the King of Sicyon, but not of Olympia ; that his authority was confined to the late games ; and that it rests with the people to dispose of the prisoner. The people, or in other words, the chorus, pronounce the pardon of Lycidas.

It is also observable of the mythology of the opera, that all the punishments consist of sacrifices offered in honour of the gods ; and that, agreeably to this system, an innocent victim is always considered as more valuable than one already stained with blood. We may be allowed to question whether this creed ever prevailed among the ancient pagans ; but it is, at least, a convenient one for poets, whom it has supplied, since the time of Guarini, with many noble scenes of poetical devotion. We thus behold Megacles and Argene successively claiming the right of dying for Lycidas ; and the same sacrifice has been frequently repeated in all the theatres of Italy. It is by the entreaties of Argene, and by the proofs which she brings forward of her former relations with Lycidas, that he is discovered to be the son of Clisthenes.

Metastasio was not a little indebted to Guarini, as has already been remarked ; but it is more particularly in his *Demofoonte* that he approaches the author of the *Pastor Fido.* The plot, and especially the introductory scene, have

* Clistene. E forse
La libertà dei falli
Permessa al sangue mio? Quì viene ogni altro
Valore a dimostrar : l' unico esempio
Esser degg' io di debolezza? Ah, questo
Di me non oda il mondo. Olà, ministri,
Risvegliate su l' ara il sacro foco ;
Va, figlio, e mori. Anch' io morrò frà poco.
Atto III. Sc. 10.

a very near resemblance. This play is founded upon the tradition of human sacrifices, celebrated in obedience to the ancient oracles of Thrace, the continuance of which depended on some enigmatical event, which could alone remove the cruel tribute exacted by the gods; upon barbaric laws, which condemned to death the woman who should venture to espouse the hereditary prince without the king's consent; upon the double substitutions of children, and double recognitions; and upon an elaborate structure of mythological romance, not transmitted to us by antiquity, and so little in unison with its usages and manners, as to place it even beyond the pale of our belief. The piece is not, however, destitute of interest; inasmuch as Metastasio uniformly expresses the passions of a lover, a spouse, or a mother, in natural and pathetic language; but it is the perpetual recurrence to dramatic common-places, so inconsistent with the dictates of real nature, and the stale magnanimity of heroes devoting themselves for each other, which throw such an air of tedious improbability over the whole.

We have hitherto pursued the career of Metastasio, in the province of mingled fable and history; and have seen him treating subjects which permitted him to transpose, to embellish, and to adapt them to the purposes of the opera which he had always in view. But he has occasionally introduced the history of times, with which we are presumed to be somewhat better acquainted; times which are, perhaps, more in unison with the interests of the tragic drama, in which the impression of truth adds so much to the emotion, than to the opera, in which we merely rest upon illusions to which we readily yield belief, provided they do not actually come in contact with our experience of previous facts. Among his historical productions, *La Clemenza di Tito* is one of those held in the highest estimation, the subject of which. with very slight difference, is the same as that of *Cinna*. It embraces, like the latter, a conspiracy against a generous sovereign, directed by a female hand. But in Corneille there are, at least, old Roman and heroic principles, which put weapons into the hands of the conspirators. A just vengeance is the object of some; the love of liberty and of their country animates others; and Cinna alone is represented as entangled and driven on by his mistress. In Metastasio every thing is put

into action by artificial wires; by the motives and passions best adapted to the interest of the opera. Vitellia, secretly in love with Titus, prevails upon Sextus to enter into a conspiracy against him, only that she may be revenged upon him for his preference of the charms of Berenice. She is, in fact, the Hermione of this new Orestes. Sextus is the friend of Titus, and has not even the shadow of a complaint against him, for Titus is the best of men, and Metastasio is an excellent painter of those faultless monsters without a spot. Indeed, there is a peculiar kind of effeminacy in the character of the poet, very favourable to the expression of goodness and tenderness of soul. Titus always appears with a gentle, confiding, and even fondling manner; his generosity surpasses that of Augustus; it is beyond all limits; but it would produce a greater impression did it proceed from a somewhat firmer character, and if the dignity of the sovereign were allowed to mingle with the kindness of the friend. Love is always so far the acting principle of all Metastasio's pieces, that death nowhere appears under a more serious aspect than in the speeches of his lovers. They speak of it, and menace each other with it, incessantly. But, in the midst of the most terrible agitation which the word may appear to excite, we feel a tolerably comfortable conviction that all is not meant that meets the ear. The rage of Vitellia, the daggers of Sextus, and even the conflagration of the Capitol itself, have altogether such a tempered fury, as will not suffer us to be really alarmed. In this piece, as well as in the preceding, those grand struggles of generosity are repeated, until they weary the mind. Annius, a friend of Sextus, renounces his mistress Servilia in favour of Titus; while Servilia, on her side, renounces the throne of Titus for the love of Annius. The latter, having exchanged dresses with Sextus, carries on his robe the conspirator's badge, and receives the accusations of the object of his affections and of his prince, who take him for a traitor, without a reply. Sextus, who is, in his turn, discovered, is also silent, in spite of the most pressing intreaties of Titus, in order that he may not involve Vitellia. We must, nevertheless, admit that these two last incidents have a more probable appearance, and are of a less conventional nature in themselves, than some of the preceding; while they are, at the same time, treated in a very delicate and touching manner. These are the passages in

Metastasio which draw tears; but they are always the tears of tenderness and of passion. No profound emotions of grief or terror are ever excited in us. He only relaxes and attenuates the fibres of the soul, and when he has rendered them sufficiently weak and flaccid, he surprises us into tears of the opera, which have nothing in common with those due to genuine tragedy.

This peculiar softness and sensibility may, perhaps, be well exemplified in the concluding lines addressed by Sextus to Vitellia, at the moment when he thinks he is about to suffer death for her sake:

> If you should feel upon your cheek
> Some breath, like Zephyr, wandering nigh,
> Oh say: This is the parting sigh
> Of the fond youth who dies for me!
> Your lover's spirit hovering near,
> Shall find a balm for every tear
> And sorrow past, to hear you kindly speak.*

When Titus afterwards wishes to draw from Sextus an avowal of his fault, the gentleness of the one, and the sufferings of the other, are both very finely expressed.

> Titus. Hear me, O Sextus!
> Think not your sovereign speaks. He is not here
> Now open all your heart, as friend to friend:
> Believe my word, Augustus shall not hear it.
> Give me the reasons of your crime. Together
> Let us find means of pardon—no less pleasure
> To Titus than to Sextus.*

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* Se mai senti spirarti sul volto
Lieve fiato che lento s' aggiri,
Dì: son questi gli estremi sospiri
Del mio fido che muore per me.
Al mio spirto dal seno disciolto
La memoria di tanti martiri
Sarà dolce con questa mercè.

Atto II. Sc. 15.

> Tito. Odimi, o Sesto!
> Siam soli; il tuo sovrano
> Non è presente. Apri il tuo core a Tito
> Confidati all' amico. Io ti prometto
> Che Augusto nol saprà. Del tuo delitto
> Dì la prima cagion. Cerchiamo insieme
> Una via di scusarti. Io ne sarei
> Forse di te più lieto.

Sesto.

SEX. I say nothing!
My fault admits of no defence.
TITUS. At least,
Grant it, in friendship. I have not concealed
From you the nearest secrets of my state,
And surely merit some return of confidence
From Sextus.
SEX. This is torment, such as never (*Aside*)
Was known before: either I must offend him,
Or worse, betray Vitellia.
TITUS. Doubt you still?
Sextus, you wound my heart;
You outrage friendship, and insult the friend,
With these unkind suspicions. Think once more,
And grant my just request.
SEX. What fatal sign
Cast its malignant influence on my birth!

This play is dedicated to the Emperor Charles VI.; the same who, in the year 1714, delivered up the faithful and unfortunate Catalonians to the ferocious vengeance of Louis XIV. and of Philip V., leaving thousands of victims to perish on the scaffold, sacrificed in his cause. Yet Metastasio can say, "I had not ventured thus to describe you, were you not universally recognized in the character of Titus; and is the poet accountable for the strong resemblance? If you would avoid every where meeting with your own likeness, you must command the Muses, O victorious Augustus, no longer to sing the exploits of heroes."

SESTO. Ah! la mia colpa
Non ha difesa.
TITO. In contracambio almeno
D' amicizia lo chiedo. Io non celai
A la tua fede i più gelosi arcani;
Merito ben che Sesto
Mi fidi un suo segreto.
SESTO. (Ecco una nuova
Spezie di pena! o dispiacere a Tito
O Vitellia accusai.)
TITO. Dubiti ancora?
Ma, Sesto, mi ferisci
Nel più vivo del cor. Vedi che troppo
Tu l' amicizia oltraggi
Con questo diffidar. Pensaci, appaga
Il mio giusto desio.
SESTO. Ma qual' astro splendeva al nascer mio!

Atto III. Sc. 6.

It is difficult to ascertain how far these specimens and translations of the original may serve to convey a just idea of Metastasio, to such of my readers as are unacquainted with the Italian language. With a genius embracing so many opposite qualities, I may, very possibly, have scarcely succeeded in shewing in what manner the most refined graces of his poetry are united with false and exaggerated descriptions; the most correct and simple expression of the passions, with a total want of probability in the characters; and an inexhaustible variety in the details, with a tedious sameness in the groundwork of the plots. They are peculiar compositions of their kind; and yet, in perusal, appear to bear too marked a resemblance to the tragic drama to be referable to any other rules. When we receive them, however, as such, we are unable to lend ourselves, in the least degree, to the illusion of those combats of the opera, in which very brilliant victories are achieved without any appearance of the dying or the dead; and we become weary of those side whispers, intended to instruct the inattentive spectators, insomuch that we never hear a falsehood uttered aloud, but it is sure to receive a contradiction in an under-breath. There is even a degree of tediousness felt in the mixture of the lyric and dramatic verses, which interrupts the expression of the sense, to give play to the imagination; but the moment we consider Metastasio in his true character, as the great poet of the opera, he will always excite that degree of admiration which is due to an author advancing, without a guide, in a new career, and leaving behind him none who ventured to imitate him. Fresh serious operas doubtless appear, daily, soliciting the attention of the composers; but where shall we meet with one which will bear perusal? Where shall we meet with an author who has acquired a reputation for even taste and talent, in a style of composition which has raised Metastasio to a rank among the greatest poets? It is not dramatic skill alone which draws forth the plaudits of the public. There is a certain delicacy and enchanting softness of character, which are as sure to win its smiles, as the most finished art in exhibiting to our view the workings of human passions, and the details of human events.

We do not mean to enter upon the discussion of the lyrical productions of Metastasio. His *cantate* and *canzonette* might

have been sufficient for the reputation of another author. They have the same smoothness of versification as his airs, the same truth of drawing, and the same delicious sweetness in the language. But our admiration is absorbed in the fine dramatic creations of a poet, who has exercised such a marked influence over the taste of his nation ; and since we have been compelled to pass over so many of these, without touching upon their peculiar excellences, it can hardly be expected that we should bestow more of our attention upon lighter pieces, which, with all their merit, are certainly not original in their way. We scarcely need to observe, that Metastasio is, at once, the most pleasing, and the least difficult of the Italian poets ; and that no one can be wrong in commencing the study of the Italian classics, and in imbibing, at its very source, the pleasure of poetic harmony, in the great poet of the opera.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ITALIAN LITERATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CONTINUED : COMEDIES—GOLDONI.

The revival of Italian literature, after more than an age of degeneracy and decline, must be allowed to be a subject worthy of our curiosity and attention. Such a regeneration, unaccompanied by any favourable combination of circumstances, and such a rapid developement of mind, amidst obstacles nearly similar to those which arrested the progress of letters in the preceding age, are surely a cause for consolation and triumph to mankind. We perceive how much vigour and perseverance are at once required effectually to repress the intellectual energies of man, and what resources for renewed action have been conferred upon him, enabling him to rise superior to the calamities which may have overwhelmed him. The political situation of Italy underwent but little improvement during the eighteenth century, and what had been gained was, perhaps, more than counterbalanced by habits of national sloth and indifference acquired by the people. A destructive war broke out, in the beginning of the

century, relating to the Spanish succession, which had, at first, the effect of transferring the provinces formerly in possession of the Spaniards to the German house of Austria. But subsequent wars, which terminated in 1748, restored a portion of the provinces, forming a part of the Imperial dominions under Charles V., to the princes of the royal family of Spain. These princes, however, were of the house of Bourbon, and the influence which they exercised in Italy, might as justly be accounted of French as of Spanish origin. During the remaining part of the century, Italy had to complain of few serious wars ; and the course of her own affairs experienced neither interruption nor encouragement from the revolutions of foreign countries.

A very formidable power had arisen in the north of Italy, in the house of Savoy, which, in 1713, attained to royal dignity, and continued to aggrandize itself during the last age, under a succession of politic and warlike princes. But though distinguished for men of superior talents and character, the state of Savoy contributed little to the advancement of Italian letters. The government was wholly military, and bestowed no attention on the progress of the human mind ; while the popular language spoken in Piedmont, a rude dialect composed of French and Italian, added to the indifference shewn by the Piedmontese for literary pursuits. The duchies of Milan and of Mantua, under the power of the house of Austria, and subsequently of that of Lorraine, were, for a long period, governed by the deputies of sovereigns, who, while they indulged a taste for Italian poetry, were as cautious of encouraging the growth of intellectual freedom in Italy, as they were in Germany. The regency of Count Firmian, and the patronage afforded by Joseph II., were, nevertheless, favourable to these provinces, during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The universities of Pavia and Mantua owed their restoration to Imperial munificence ; and the disputed jurisdiction of the Popes gave rise to more liberal doctrines, pronounced from the chairs, than had been heard in Italy for a considerable length of time. The Venetian Republic, striving to disguise its decay of importance and of power under the cloak of policy and of resolute neutrality, seemed only desirous of burying itself in oblivion. While it encouraged the sciences in the university of Padua, philosophy

was carefully excluded. Amusements were, also, liberally encouraged among the people, for the purpose of diverting their attention from more serious affairs, and the splendour of its theatres seemed to infuse fresh energy into the drama of Italy ; while the Dukes of Parma, and many other potentates, endeavoured, by rewards and encouragement, to produce pieces of equal excellence, and to vie with the Venetians, though in vain. The duchy of Modena, still in possession of the house of Este, with that of Parma, revived in favour of a younger branch of the Bourbons, had both been almost extinguished in the wars of the early part of the century. They were not again restored until after the lapse of a considerable time and with great difficulty ; nor did they in any way contribute to the advancement of letters, except by small pensions bestowed upon poets of the court. The grand-duchy of Tuscany had been subjected to a variety of changes, at different periods. During some years, at the beginning of the century, Cosmo III. still continued to reign. A jealous and suspicious bigot, he held the intellect, as well as the conscience of his subjects, in the harshest state of vassalage. The monks were his counsellors, and the whole of that beautiful country wore the aspect of one of their gloomiest convents. His son, Giovanni Gastone, on the contrary, sought to bury the sense of his own infirmities, and of the approaching extinction of his family, in a sort of perpetual carnival, and dissipation of mind. When, in the year 1737, Tuscany was transferred to Francis I. of Lorraine, who had married Maria Theresa, he appeared inclined to abandon it to its fate, refusing to reside there, on the plea of devoting his attention to the more important concerns of the empire. But his son Leopold, when he assumed the sovereignty, began with great zeal and activity to apply the doctrines of philosophy to the affairs of state. He invited the attention of his subjects to political studies, and himself led them in the path they should pursue. He restored to the people of Tuscany the power of thinking, of speaking, and of writing, to an extent, which, though not unlimited, had no resemblance to the servile repose to which Italy had been accustomed for upwards of two hundred years. A pretty correct edition of the Italian poets and classics was published, by his particular direction, at Leghorn, under the fictitious date of London, which consisted almost entirely of

prohibited books. The papal dominions were also in the possession, during this age, of two sovereign pontiffs, who appeared to emulate the example of Popes Nicholas and Pius of the fifteenth century, by the encouragement they afforded to letters and to the sciences. These men were Clement XIV. and Benedict XIV., whose personal influence, however, was rendered much less effectual by the opposition of the government of the priests. In fact, the territories of the Church, during the whole of this age, might be compared to one immense desert, where no signs of cultivation or of life appeared. The university of Bologna, alone, seemed to be exempted from the universal apathy which reigned around. Letters appeared to share with commerce the protection afforded by a municipal government, which preserved some resemblance of its ancient liberty. And, finally, the house of Bourbon, which had borne sway in Naples since the year 1735, attempted to mark the revival of that ancient monarchy, by advancing the progress of science and of letters. Charles IV. of Naples, and III. of Spain, gave the first impulse to these pursuits, of which the nation availed itself, during the long and lethargic reign of his successor.

We may gather, even from this brief sketch of the times, that the disposition displayed by the different potentates of Italy towards the cause of letters was of a much more encouraging nature, during the eighteenth century, than during the preceding age. Yet we may observe that none of these princes had received a very favourable education, nor possessed a character capable of undertaking noble things. A few of them are, doubtless, entitled to the praise of good intentions, but none have any claim to a lasting reputation, nor to a high place in the historical records of the times. A contracted spirit prevailed throughout their counsels and administration, even more than in their own minds. An established practice of exact controul, of obstinate dislike to every thing new, and of jealous inquietude and mistrust, ran through all the inferior departments of the government, habituating its subjects to a state of passive obedience and restraint. The corruption of manners was the result rather of the dictates of fashion than of any excess of the passions; a general frivolity occupied the place of all serious reflection, and all warmth of conversation; while long habits of indolence,

farther enfeebling the mind, seemed to incapacitate it for every kind of occupation. The fashionable custom of attendant *Cicisbei*, as little favourable to intellect as to manners, engaged the chief portion of the time of those whose object it was to trifle the whole of it away, and devolved hourly duties upon beings who might boast of having no other aim in life. They possessed no new ideas, no resources, either in the conduct of life, in action, or in speech ; and the hopelessness of applying study to any laudable purpose led to an extreme remissness in the education of youth. The universities, which formerly bore so high a reputation, were frequented only by the students of theology, of medicine, and of jurisprudence, with a view to a lucrative profession ; and the hours devoted to more liberal studies than those of the priest, the physician, and the advocate, were generally considered as lost. The numerous private academies, which had produced so many distinguished characters, during the fifteenth century, were now closed ; and only a few monkish seminaries remained, where the chief object of education was not so much to teach as to restrict, and to inculcate the duty of submitting the reason and the will to the established law of silence and dissimulation, of obedience and fear. In short, the whole nation might be considered as virtually extinct ; or if any vestiges of its former great qualities were to be discovered, they were found in those obscure stations where the influence of education and of society had not penetrated, among the peasants and the lowest classes of the people, who, it may be observed, uniformly retain the same power of imagination, and the same quickness of feeling, as during the happiest periods of their annals.

They who had sufficient energy to emerge out of this state of general apathy and degradation, were first induced to make the effort from very laudable views. They took a national pride in demonstrating to the world that the literature of no people could boast, in any of its branches, of a superiority over the Italian. Their information was derived from foreign sources, and chiefly from the French. They began to compare themselves with others, before they had learned properly to appreciate themselves. Imagining that they discovered in the works of the French critics too severe and partial a judgment of Italian literature, they attempted to prove its

fallacy by their works. They had been accused of want of comprehension, or want of observation, of the rules of Aristotle ; and they immediately made them the main article of their literary creed. We recognize this emulative spirit in the eagerness evinced by the Italians to display the excellences of their writers in every branch of knowledge ; and, indeed, in all the productions belonging to this century, they sought to convey an impression that in nothing had they been surpassed. Such motives, too evidently apparent, deduct largely from the sincerity and originality of the works of the eighteenth century.

One of the first attempts to supply their deficiency, for which the Italians had been reproached, in dramatic poetry, proceeded from a very tame imitator of French models, who could boast nothing of the genius they displayed. Pietro Jacopo Martelli was professor of literature at Bologna, where he died in the year 1727. He took Corneille for his prototype in the tragic, and Moliere, in the comic line ; and, with talents something below mediocrity, he succeeded in preserving only the outline of their pieces, the combination of their scenes, and their theatrical regulations ; but the spirit and the power of their drama were beyond his reach. The undertaking, however, proved so far successful, in point of language, that it conferred upon the Italian a new species of verse, entitled, from its author, *Martelliano*, which is still occasionally employed. To give his pieces a more complete resemblance to the French, Martelli wished to adapt the Alexandrine to Italian poetry ; and with this view he made an alteration in it, which, though indispensable in point of language, rendered it intolerable to the ear. He added a mute syllable to the cesura of the hemistich, giving to the *stanza Martelliana*, a sort of movement, at the same time discordant, vulgar, and abrupt. All writers of Italian comedy, since that period, have adopted the same metre, whenever they wished to compose in verse.

Faggiuoli, a Florentine, who died in 1742, is another of those authors who attempted to introduce a new style of comedy on the model of the French. The chief merit of his dramas, consisting of seven volumes, will be found in their correct delineation of manners, in their popular humour, and in the ease and purity of their language. But the fire and

force of dramatic genius are wanting. Even the finest passages possess only a negative kind of beauty; and Faggiuoli, like Martelli, failed to fill up the void in the annals of the Italian drama.

The Marchese Scipione Maffei was the third to enter the lists on this occasion. He could, at least, boast the possession of real talent and feeling, both of which he displayed in his *Merope*, deserving the extended reputation it acquired. Maffei was born at Verona, in 1675; and like most of the literary characters of Italy, produced verses at a very early age. His genius embraced a wide field of human knowledge, being equally conversant with history, antiquity and natural philosophy. He undertook a poem, in an hundred cantos, upon the harmony of human virtues. Consulting the interests of the theatre, he made a selection of the best tragedies and comedies written in the sixteenth century, which the theatrical managers had suffered to sink into oblivion. Jealous of the fame of the French drama, he produced a critique on the *Rodogune* of Corneille, embracing general strictures upon the taste of the French theatre. In a word, he resolved, at the age of thirty-nine, to present the world with a model of true tragedy, such as he conceived it should be; and availed himself both of the Greek and the French dramatists, without tamely following in their path. His tragedy, brought forward, at Modena, in the spring of 1713, enjoyed a run of success altogether unexampled in the annals of the Italian theatre. It arrived at the sixteenth edition, and the autograph manuscript of the author is preserved as one of the sacred reliques of Italy.

As the *Merope* of Euripides is lost to the moderns, Maffei may be considered as the first author, possessed of genius, who availed himself of this very dramatic and affecting story, which has since been treated by Voltaire and by Alfieri. Maffei piqued himself on the possibility of convincing the moderns that a tragedy might be written without a syllable of love, and without adopting the romantic taste which prevailed in the drama of France. He succeeded, in fact, in exciting, and in maintaining, a very lively interest, by the danger to which a mother exposes her only son, under the idea that she is about to avenge him. A few of the scenes are peculiarly affecting, by the contrast offered between the

fury of Merope and the resignation of Ægisthus, who is supposed to feel a presentiment of her being his mother. But the idea of Merope burning to execute vengeance, with her own hands, upon a prisoner lying bound before her, instead of awakening our sympathy, makes us recoil with disgust.*

* The opening of this scene will serve to give an idea both of the beauties and the defects of the *Merope* of Maffei.

EURISO. Eccomi a cenni tuoi.
MEROPE. Tosto di lui
T' assicura.
EUR. Son pronto, or più non fugge,
Se questo braccio non ci lascia.
EGISTO. Come!
E perchè mai fuggir dovrei? Regina,
Non basta dunque un sol tuo cenno? imponi:
Spiegami il tuo voler; che far poss' io?
Vuoi ch' immobil mi renda? immobil sono.
Ch' io pieghi le ginocchia? ecco le piego.
Ch' io t' offra inerme il petto? eccoti il petto.
ISM. (Chi crederia che sotto un tanto umile
Sembiante tanta iniquità s'asconda?)
MER. Spiega la fascia, e ad un di questi marmi
L' annoda in guisa che fuggir non possa.
EGISTO. O ciel, che stravaganza!
EUR. Or quà, spediamci,
E per tuo ben non far nè pur sembiante
Di repugnare o di far forza.
EGISTO. E credi
Tu che quì fermo tuo valor mi tenga?
E ch' uom tu fossi da atterrirmi, e trarmi
In questo modo? Non se trè tuoi pari
Stessermi intorno; gli orsi alla foresta
Non ho temuto d' affrontare io solo.
EUR. Ciancia a tuo senno, pur ch' io quì ti leghi.
EGISTO. Mira, colei mi lega: ella mi toglie
Il mio vigor: il suo real volere
Venero e temo: fuor di ciò, già cinto
T' avrei con queste braccia, e sollevato
T' avrei percosso al suol.
MER. Non tacerai,
Temerario? affrettar cerchi il tuo fato?
EGISTO. Regina, io cedo, io t' ubbidisco, io stesso
Qual ti piace, m' adatto. Ha pochi istanti
Ch' io fui per te tratto dai ceppi, ed ecco
Ch' io ti rendo il tuo don: vieni tu stessa;
Stringimi a tuo piacer: tu discioglieati
Queste misere membra, e tu le annoda.
MER. Or va, recami un asta.

EGISTO.

The anxiety of the spectator is well supported, and even becomes more poignant from scene to scene, although it must be allowed to be rather that of an intrigue, than of strict tragedy. Too many adventures, also, are inwoven, and somewhat too unaccountably; while the incidents come upon us as if it were by mere chance. The whole is composed in *versi sciolti*, or blank verse, which are equally elevated, simple, and harmonious. Maffei, ridiculing the measured stateliness of French verse, wished to present us with a more natural and easy style, and, perhaps, occasionally ran into the opposite extreme of a trivial and prosaic turn of expression. This degree of simplicity, however, sometimes gave him the command of language of a more true and touching description; as when Euryses, Merope's confidant, attempts to console her, on hearing of the death of her son, by bringing to mind examples of fortitude under similar calamities:

EUR. Think how the mighty king, for whom all Greece
In arms arose 'gainst Troy, in Aulis gave
His dear child to a fierce and cruel death,
As the gods will'd it.
MER. But, O Euryses, the great gods had never
Required it of a mother.*

This sentiment, however, is not Maffei's; he was indebted for it to a mother suffering under real affliction.

There is, moreover, a very graceful turn of language and a natural expression of the feelings, though rather of a pas-

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EGISTO. Un asta! o sorte
Qual di me gioco oggi ti prendi? e quale
Commesso ho mai nuovo delitto? Dimmi:
A qual fine son io quì avvinto e stretto?
MER. China quegli occhi, traditore, a terra.
ISM. Eccoti il ferro.
EUR. Io il prendo, e se t' è in grado,
Gliel presento alla gola.
MER. A me quel ferro.
Atto III. Sc. 4.

* EUR. Tu ben sai che il gran rè, per cui fu trat...
La Grecia in armi a Troia, in Auli ci stesso
La cara figlia a cruda morte offerse,
E sai che il comandar gli stessi Dei.
MER. O Euriso, non avrian già mai gli Dei
Cio comandato ad una madre.
Atto II. Sc. 6

toral than of a tragic nature, in the speech of Polydore, where he first discovers the son of his friend in the palace of Merope, and recalls his numerous virtues to mind. The following translation of this passage, in blank verse, by Voltaire, is found in his letter to Maffei.

Eurises, c'est donc vous?
Vous, cet aimable enfant que si souvent Sylvie
Se faisait un plaisir de conduire à la cour?
Je crois que c'est hier. O! que vous êtes prompte!
Que vous croissez, jeunesse! et que dans vos beaux jours
Vous nous avertissez de vous céder la place.*

From the number of similar attempts made by Voltaire, we might suppose he was desirous of introducing this species of verse into French poetry; although he did not wish to incur himself the responsibility attaching to it. But he should have avoided, somewhat more carefully, prosaic turns of expression, in lines possessing no longer the attraction of rhyme. The Italian language, on the other hand, is distinguished by much greater elevation of style, when written in blank verse, than in rhyme.

Maffei, likewise, applied his talents to comedy; but, of two pieces, which he composed in this line, neither appeared to meet with much success. He died in the year 1755, at the advanced age of eighty years. The example which he gave to the dramatists of the day, in his tragedy of *Merope*, seemed to rouse them to fresh exertions, and a host of writers took him for their model in a series of tragedies, which appeared during the early part of the century. None of these deserved a lasting reputation; and the collections which have been made of them, will hardly reward us for the trouble of perusal.

The Abbàte Pietro Chiari, poet to the court of the Duke of Modena, in the hope of producing a new era in the dramatic annals of Italy, composed no less than ten volumes of comedies in verse. These enjoyed a partial success; being

* Tu dunque sei quel fanciullin che in corte
Silvia condur solea quasi per pompa:
Parmi l' altr' ieri. Oh quanto siete presti,
Quanto mai v' affrettate, o giovinetti,
A farvi adulti, ed a gridar tacendo
Che noi diam loco

Atto IV. Sc. 4.

received much in the same manner as his romances had before been by the ladies of Italy; a proof to what an extent the corruption of good taste, and of the drama must have proceeded. They are characterised by a solemn emptiness and by a common-place affectation, which render them equally tedious and ridiculous.

Carlo Goldoni, at length, made his appearance; and the revolution so frequently attempted in the taste of the Italian theatre, by men whose talents were unequal to the task, was reserved for one, whose genius was capable of making a stronger impression on the minds of his countrymen. Goldoni was a native of Venice, born in 1707, and he died in Paris in 1792. He was at first intended for an advocate, but the pleasure he derived from a short tour made with a company of comedians, led him to renounce his profession, and to attach himself wholly to the theatre, where he commenced his original career in 1746. The first piece represented by the company to which he belonged, was his *Donna di Garbo: The Lady of Merit*, which was received with very general applause. From that period he poured forth his pieces with astonishing facility, and traces of his rapidity may be clearly perceived in the compositions themselves; of which, we are assured, he wrote no less than one hundred and fifty. He speedily overthrew the reputation acquired by the Abbate Chiari, whose tame and pedantic productions could not bear a moment's competition with those of Goldoni. He afterwards encountered more powerful opposition from the pen of Count Carlo Gozzi, who accused him of having deprived the Italian theatre of the charm of poetry and imagination. Gozzi had obtained a very popular, although a short-lived name, in 1761, by working fairy tales into dramas; and Goldoni had to struggle against him for a considerable time. He at last became irritated; and in the same year, in a moment of indignation, set out for Paris, where he produced, in the French language, *Le Bourru bienfaisant: The morose Philanthropist*, represented for the first time in the year 1771. He was offered a situation at court, and notwithstanding the renewed success which his works met with in Italy, he could not be induced to visit it again. He became blind in the decline of life, and died in 1792.

In the outset of his career, Goldoni found the Italian theatre

divided between two classes of dramatic composition. These were the classical comedies, and the comedies of art. The first class comprehended such as were more particularly the production of the closet; the fruits of anxious study and correct observance of the Aristotelian rules; but possessing none of the popular qualities sought for by the public. Of these, some were pedantic copies of the ancients; others, imitations of these copies; and others again, were borrowed from the French. We have already bestowed sufficient notice upon these, and have pointed out to what degree they are deficient in the qualities of originality, strength, and wit. The comedies of art were the production of the comedians themselves, and were chiefly extemporary, or sketched with a very slight outline, intended for the actor at his pleasure to fill up. Such was the species of composition which brought upon the Italian theatre the reproach of endeavouring to interest the public only by its popular pleasantries, by gross buffooneries, and by adventures equally improbable and absurd. Foreigners invariably treated them with extreme contempt; while the Italians themselves, ashamed to hear them mentioned, and conscious that the public was pleased with no other kind of exhibition, had nothing to offer in their own excuse. In fact, the people resorted in crowds to witness the comedy of art, while the classical theatre was left to the actors and to empty benches. Yet, neither were the people in the wrong; nor were the accusations attaching to the comedies of art unjust. The truth is, they were the only productions agreeable to the national spirit of the people, and which gave a just view of the force and vivacity of the Italian character.

Theatrical managers, who gave a new comedy every evening, were naturally desirous, for economical reasons, of making use of the dresses of the night for the personages who were to appear on the ensuing day; and hence, doubtless, the origin of the comic Italian masks. A sort of abstract consideration of the different characters supposed to be requisite to give a natural and complete view of familiar life, was entered into by these comic speculators; and two fathers, two lovers, two ladies, and three or four domestics, were generally fixed upon. An appropriate situation, a name, a country, a mask, and a dress, were bestowed on each of these; and

each actor was entitled to one of these personages by right of long prescription, and strove to make himself master of his character, his tone of voice, and his repartees. Dramatic tradition, also, came in aid of this first distribution of the parts: a particular motion of the head, tone of voice, or gesture, adopted by some uncommon performer in the character of Pantaloon, of Doctor Balanzoni, of Harlequin, or of Columbine, became the peculiar attributes of such fantastic beings. Every thing was "set down and conned by rote;" the character, the ideas, and the minutest tricks; insomuch that the actor had no scope allowed him for invention; his business was to fill correctly the part which had been assigned to him. Each individual personage, as it has been very happily observed by A. W. Schlegel, in his *Dramatic Course*, resembled one of the pieces at a game of chess, whose progress is ready chalked out, and invariably subject to the same rules; a knight is never permitted to move like a bishop or a rook. Yet, with pieces of a limited number, and of invariable power, the combinations of the game are infinite; and the same remark may very properly be applied to the characters of the Italian theatre.

But in proportion as less was left to the discretion of the actor to do, in the invention of this imaginary personage, the more safely might he be entrusted with every thing incumbent upon him to say. An actor, who had never appeared on the boards except in the character of Pantaloon, or one who had, all his life, done nothing but play the part of Harlequin, was much less likely to commit any improprieties of character, than even the author who had produced the piece. Of this, the latter was so sensible, that he was in general content to write a mere sketch. He brought upon the scene two or three of these personages, pointed out the manner in which their colloquies were to end, and took his leave of them in the confidence that they would put the finish to their natural humour in their own way. These outlines of performances, were in repute during the whole of the seventeenth and the greatest part of the eighteenth century, when they were, also, introduced into France by the actors of Italy. They had, morever, no little influence in fixing the taste for the species of humour most appropriate and admissible for the Italian stage. This humour could seldom be derived from the subject of the piece; and it was, on the contrary, neces-

sary to elicit it almost entirely from the characters. The comic situations and incidents were all arranged before hand; because a word too little or too much, would be quite sufficient to change the whole aspect of affairs; to release an unlucky wretch from his difficulties; to discover the secret of the piece, or to explain a mutual misapprehension. Besides a really good pleasantry, which ought to be equally ingenious, just, and pertinent, is by no means such a vulgar article as always to come to hand at the moment it is wanted; and it is very well if it can be elaborated before. A good actor had, nevertheless, sufficient scope allowed him to display a humorous imagination, without encroaching upon the province of another, or bringing into jeopardy the interest of the piece. Pantaloon was at liberty to make a display of good-natured folly; the Doctor had an old prescription for his pedantic vanity; Columbine for her roguery, and Harlequin for his foolery. Gaiety was expected from the drolleries; but it had no malice in it; inasmuch as each held up his own faults and his own happy absurdities to view, instead of ridiculing the foibles of his neighbour; but the satire was thus very frequently as little pointed as it was true. It failed in point, because the performers neither observed nor knew before hand, the persons whom they might have to deal with upon the scene; and it wanted nature, inasmuch as each actor caricatured the part which he had to play, for the sake of producing greater effect.

But Goldoni, while he engaged the actors to deliver his pieces exactly as he had written them, with a prohibition against introducing dialogues at their pleasure, contrived to approach nearer to the comedies of art, than any author who had until then appeared. He retained in, at least, one half of his plays all the masks of Italian comedy; leaving them in undisputed possession of the character which tradition had assigned to them: and when the performers were freed from the immediate restraint of the author's presence, they again began to exhibit their extemporary talents; so that, as the writers who succeeded to Goldoni renounced the masks altogether, it is only in the pieces of the latter that we are still treated, in Italy, with the appearance of an actor playing his own part as an *improvvisatore.*

Goldoni is considered, by the Italians, as the author who

carried the dramatic art, in Italy, to its highest point of perfection; and he must, certainly, be allowed to have possessed no common powers. He had a fertility of invention, which supplied him with subjects for his comic muse, almost always new; and such facility of composition, that he not unfrequently produced a comedy of five acts, in verse, within as many days: a rapidity so far prejudicial, as it led him to bestow too little pains upon the correctness of his comedies. His dialogue was extremely animated, earnest, and full of meaning; and with a very exact knowledge of the national manners, he possessed the rare faculty of giving a lively representation of them on the stage. To these he added an exquisite relish of Italian humour, which delights in amusing pictures of absurdity, and in the genius of the buffoon.

It is not to be denied, however, that Goldoni's works are not so highly estimated by foreigners as by the people of Italy; and this is chiefly to be attributed to the want of those romantic and poetic elements in the national manners, which renders them less suitable for dramatic display The passion of love must still form the animating principle of our comedy, as well as of our romance; being, at once, the most lively and poetical of all the social passions, and that which gives the greatest developement to character, and the strongest colours to our future days. But lasting and impassioned love, taking its source at once in the heart, the understanding, and the senses, and combining their qualities in one; a love which founds its pleasure upon mutual preference, cannot easily be supposed, in Italian manners, to aim at marriage as its ultimate object. Educated in complete seclusion from society, and obliged to maintain the utmost reserve, their young women are subjected to as severe an ordeal of public opinion for merely appearing in the world, as for engaging in a dishonourable intrigue. They are thus, in some instances, induced to yield the rein to their feelings, not only in a very inconsiderate manner, but with an impetuosity and imprudence equally surprising and revolting; and they often learn to think less of indulging a choice of affection than of obtaining, in a general way, an establishment in marriage. This they look forward to as the means of at once throwing off the restraints imposed upon them by their parents and by society, and the affectation of a reserve as little agreeable to their

inclinations as to their taste; and as the moment for enjoying the pleasures afforded them in the world. In Italy, it is made a point of duty, in a discreet and sensible girl, to accept the husband provided for her by her parents, whatever may be her objections to his character, his understanding, or his person; and it is this singular sort of moral, always inculcated by the comic poet, which exhibits such an amusing contrast to our own preconceived opinions on the subject. Thus, in *The Twins of Venice*, a subject treated at least twenty times by the dramatists of every nation, since the time of Plautus, and the humour of which depends upon the mistakes arising out of the perfect resemblance between two brothers, we behold one of them just arrived from the mountains of Bergamo, to espouse Rosetta, the daughter of Doctor Balanzoni. Now Rosetta is a virtuous and prudent girl, whom the author delights to hold up as a model of duty to the young ladies of Italy. Her lover is an idle, ignorant, cowardly, uneducated fool; a sort of harlequin, intended to support the absurdity of the piece to its close. Rosetta is at some pains to repel his impertinence, and to keep him at a distance, although, at the same time, she frequently gives us to understand that he is far from being very disagreeable. The author rids himself of this notable hero by poisoning him upon the stage, and further justifies this summary way of proceeding, in his preface, by the ingenious argument, that, far from exciting any tragic feelings, he only amuses us by the ridiculous manner in which he meets with his death. But I doubt whether the spectators do not view the affair in another light, and feel that the levity of a buffoon, attending the commission of an atrocious crime, adds considerably to its horror. However this may be, Rosetta, after expressing a proper sense of her despair, in the next scene accepts the hand of Lelio, another species of the tribe of fools, whose boasting falsehoods and absurdities had sustained the first four acts. Until the fifth, he had been devoted to another lady; but he has then the option of Rosetta's hand, with a fortune of fifteen thousand crowns; and exclaims, in the presence of the lady, "She cannot but be agreeable; fifteen thousand crowns confer beauty upon every one." The lady's consent is then asked; and Rosetta replies, "That she has always pleasure in fulfilling the wishes of her father." This

utter want of delicacy is, we must confess, too frequently met with in the manners of the people; but we can hardly persuade ourselves that such manners are adapted to the stage.

The female characters of most of this author's pieces discover little more delicacy in their sentiments and conduct. Thus, in his *Donna di testa debole:* or *The weak-headed Lady*, D. Elvira makes improper advances, and induces her friend to take similar steps, in her name, to D. Fausto, a lover of her sister-in-law, not out of any affection she entertains for him, but out of mere jealousy lest her sister-in-law should be married before herself.* She, likewise, gives a very sharp lecture to her uncle Pantaloon, the master of the house, for not shewing more alertness in providing her with a separate establishment, in marriage † As the name indicates the genius of the character, all the Rosettas of his pieces are found to be sentimental young ladies, a little amorous, and very obedient; with a vast ambition of being married, but with still higher notions of paternal authority. Goldoni's Beatrices, on the contrary, are of the opposite character, full of vivacity, impetuosity, and frolic, as a contrast to his melancholy Rosettas. Sometimes their extreme violence carries them beyond all kind of conventional bounds. We are presented, in many of Goldoni's plays, with young ladies just eloped from home, pursuing their admirers in a student's gown, or a military roquelaure, proceeding from place to place, and after all concluding their adventures happily. Such personages have a very strong infusion of the national character; no country in the world affording so many instances of the triumph of passion, when once the fair martyrs have overcome all obstacles, in order to yield themselves up to its dictates; but the results attributed by the romance are by no means probable. There is no truth in them; and it is prejudicial, in a moral point of view, to give honourable results to a vicious and dissipated course of life, such as that of Beatrice in *The Twins of Venice*, or in *Harlequin the Valet of Two Masters;* and to suppose that female virtue incurs no risk by an elopement from the paternal mansion. It may, to be sure, be observed, that regard to dramatic propriety, not always favourable to morals, would

* La Donna di testa debole. *Atto II. Sc.* 10.

† The same. *Atto I. Sc.* 14.

not admit of a less fortunate conclusion to the story. In truth, the scenic heroines, by pretty general agreement, are supposed, on the whole, to entertain only virtuous sentiments; and this rule, which I am far from presuming to impugn, gives a singular air of incongruity to the representation of manners, which are by no means so immaculate. The chief developement of the passions, the absorbing interest of life, in Italy, appear to be centered in that whimsical relation known by the name of *Cicisbei*, or *Cavalieri serventi*. The restraint there imposed upon young unmarried women, and the unbounded liberty granted to those who wear the hymeneal yoke, invariably led, according to the customs of the country, to the reign of love, subsequent to that of marriage. Love was then no longer confounded with the vague desire of a settlement in life, but sprung from intimate acquaintance, coincidence of feelings, and an union of the whole soul. This, however, had a very unfavourable influence on all the relations of social life; on the peace of families, the education of children, and the character of woman. None of the comic authors ventured to exhibit a sentiment of so immoral a tendency upon the stage, although they could not wholly exclude one of the most characteristic traits from the pictures of national manners thus exhibited. *Cicisbei* are introduced into the greatest part of the comedies, without, however, being permitted to breathe a syllable of love. We are almost at a loss to perceive the object of their hopes or fears; their situation renders them peculiarly dull and unimpassioned; it never changes; and in this very disinterested sentiment, leading to no action, and permitted to give no expression to its wishes, we anticipate as little of the intrigue as of the catastrophe.

Nor is it the tender passion only which is thus misrepresented in the character of Goldoni's women. We find others equally inconsistent, both in point of natural and dramatic propriety. I have invariably found the exhibition of feminine friendship received with the most lively applause on the Italian stage. The ladies, in Goldoni, always meet each other with the most rapturous expressions of affection, bestowing mutual flattery upon their graces of mind and person, with the warmest assurances that they take infinite pleasure in participating each other's feelings; yet the moment they are sepa-

rated, they attack each other's character in a strain of mingled hatred and contempt. Unfortunately, this species of hypocrisy among fair acquaintance is of no very rare occurrence in Italy. It is, perhaps, more usual there than in other places; but it required no great degree of skill, on the part of the author, to bring this contrast of manners into view. There can be no merit in describing a scene which calls for no particular delicacy, judgment, or accuracy. And even supposing such hypocrisy to be natural, it is equally low and revolting when it occurs so frequently throughout the author's pieces; and, by renouncing the interest arising out of real friendship, he, at the same time, deprives himself of one grand source of touching the feelings, and of weaving and unravelling his plot.

In the same manner, the good and the bad qualities of his women are all carried to an extreme; there are no redeeming points in some, and no foibles in others. In one of his comedies, Goldoni aimed at throwing ridicule upon the tastes of learned ladies, in which he far surpassed the degree of extravagance and caricature for which Moliere has been reproached; whose portraits may be considered as patterns of delicacy when placed by the side of the Italian. The subject of this satirical piece, *La Donna di testa debole*, brings forward very powerful arguments, with much acuteness and good sense, for the cultivation of her mind. But this she conceives chiefly to depend upon the number of lessons she takes in the Latin syntax, from an ignorant student, who instructs her to speak in a pedantic jargon, which cannot fail to render her ridiculous as well as her master, neither of them being able to utter a sentence without a solecism, or to understand the Latin decree pronounced by the judge in her lawsuit. In Italy, however, the nature of pedantry is not understood. A person is never exposed to ridicule for making a parade of the knowledge he really possesses, but for piquing himself on that which he does not, in the least, understand. Upon this distinction, Goldoni founded his *Donna di Garbo: the Lady of Merit*, as a contrast to the *Donna di testa debole: The weak-headed Lady;* the former of whom is a most intolerable pedant; yet because she surpasses every one opposed to her in real scientific knowledge, she is fixed upon as the source of the interest

of the piece, and as a pattern for all studious ladies. Holding a menial situation in the house of Dr. Balanzoni, she engages the affections of the doctor, who is induced to marry her. Sometimes she reads her own poetry; sometimes she argues a Latin thesis, and at others, engages in scholastic disputes; displaying, throughout the whole performance, the sort of information least agreeable in women. In another Italian comedy, *Di Napoli Signorelli*, we are presented with a lady, in a man's dress, playing the part of an advocate; and the specimen of her pleading, sprinkled with texts of Roman law, is inserted at length in the drama.

Defects of the same kind are apparent, also, in the characters of the men. In Italy no considerations on moral philosophy, which are always suspected of endangering the interests of religion, are allowed to appear. Sound morality is, in consequence, so falsely appreciated and understood, that what a comic author not unfrequently exhibits as noble, delicate, and virtuous, is precisely of an opposite nature; and the same remark will even apply to more serious writers. Dissimulation and breach of faith are vices of which the Italian people are in general accused. This fact may, perhaps, have given rise to that frequent inculcation of a religious observance of the word, which we so frequently find placed among the virtues of the Italian stage. But they extend this duty to cases where it will not apply, depending entirely upon the will of others; and they treat the heart and hand of a daughter as if it were always in a father's power to confer them. We have an instance of this in *The Obedient Daughter;* a piece, in other respects, deficient neither in interest nor wit, where Pantaloon encourages his daughter's regard for Florindo, who had set out for Leghorn to obtain the consent of his parents to their nuptials. He returns successful; but a few hours after his arrival, Count Ottavio, a rich blockhead, makes his appearance, requesting Rosetta's hand from her father, who is not disposed to lose so favourable an opportunity of a rich alliance. He, therefore, gives his daughter's consent, without consulting her on the subject; and his word, on such an occasion, is considered as irrevocable. Florindo, in despair, pleads his prior title in vain; and in vain Rosetta, while she obeys, discovers the wretchedness of her heart. The new lover, of whom no one in the family knew any thing, likewise displays

the most childish extravagance in the presence both of father and daughter, all in vain. He is a bad character, a spendthrift, and a coward; but Pantaloon, though neither an obstinate, nor avaricious father, but a kind and sensible parent, with a high sense of his duties, has given his word and will observe it. He deeply sympathizes in his daughter's affliction, but is not the less resolved to sacrifice her to his promise. Rosetta submits to every thing, with the greatest resignation; she consents to give her hand to the Count that very day, and even tells her father that, for his sake, she does it with pleasure. The only reason of the marriage not taking place proceeds from the Count, who, as a fresh instance of impertinence, breaks his promise with the lady.

Even integrity is represented under very false colours, and without the least pretension to delicacy of mind. Really honest people make such repeated protestations that they will respect the property of others, as might, in other places, give rise to strong suspicions against them. In *The Twins of Venice*, Tonino, intended by the author for an accomplished gentleman, obtains, through the mistake of Harlequin, jewels to a very large amount, with a purse of gold belonging to his brother. He repeatedly acquaints us that "Such an incident might have made another's fortune; but as for me, I am an honourable character, and scorn to meddle with other people's property. I shall take care of this case of jewels, and of this purse, and when I am lucky enough to meet with their right owner, I shall not fail punctually to restore them." He, nevertheless, in the next scene, offers the jewels to a woman whom he has reason to believe to be an impostor; and he finally entrusts them, under the express condition of restoring them to the proprietor, to a stranger, who turns out to be a rogue. Learned characters are invariably represented as intolerant pedants; not for the purpose of casting ridicule upon them; but because little knowledge exists in Italy; because those who possess it seldom appear in society, and know as little of what is due to the self-love of others, as they do of the ridicule attached to their own vanity. Courage is turned into a sort of bravado, which fails upon being put to the proof. Duels are frequently exhibited on the stage, while the heroes as frequently pause to reflect, whether it might not be the safest way to assassinate their adversary.

In describing the extremes of absurdity and of vice, Goldoni threw great animation into the portraits he drew. There is, in general, a consistency in the character of each of his personages, which he preserves throughout, and which appears in every action, word, and gesture. Such a character, however, has, for the most part, little resemblance in nature, or in truth. As there is no real society in Italy, no power of opinion, and no satire which is dreaded, we there behold errors and vices exhibited with a fearless sincerity, which we in vain look for in any other country. There are certain limits, however, beyond which the comic writer must not venture to pass, if he would avoid exciting feelings less allied to pleasure than to disgust. Cowardice is, perhaps, the quality best adapted to rouse an audience to laughter; but Goldoni, instead of confining it to persons altogether of a ridiculous stamp, conferred it, in many instances, upon his lovers, whom he thus rendered at least as effeminate as the objects of their adoration. Extreme perfidy and depravity of mind ought, by no means, to be admitted on the stage; nor, indeed, any character which is likely to be assailed by the hisses of the audience. Pancrace, in the *Twins*, is one of these; he is at once a hypocrite, a coward, and a brute, who finishes his career by poisoning his rival with so little prospect of advantage to himself, that the improbability of the circumstance adds to the feeling of disgust which his crime inspires.

This feeling of delicacy in the spectators is, in France, carried so far as not to admit of the appearance of female adventurers upon the stage. But the Italians are not so fastidious; and it is, perhaps, chiefly in the parts assigned to female dancers and actresses; in the pride which their father is supposed to take in their riches and success; and in the incessant mixture of vain boasting and of meanness, that Goldoni discovers talents at once natural and humorous. In the pleasing comedy entitled *La Locandiera: The Landlady*, in which the animation of the dialogue, and the whimsical contradiction of the characters, are carried very far, the only females who make their appearance are three intriguers. The author here attempts to centre the interest in Mirandolina, the mistress of the inn, who supports the character of an experienced coquette, full of life, variety, and compliment; totally insensible to the tender passion with which she dallies

for mere pastime, but quite virtuous at heart ; and with a reputation which, in conclusion, procures her a very suitable establishment in married life. And, in order to exhibit her excellent points in a more pleasing light, the author does not scruple to contrast her with two very impertinent, assuming, and grasping adventurers, who would not be tolerated, for a moment, on the French stage.

In the *Jealous Miser*, Pantaloon appears as an old usurer, who has just taken to himself a young wife, and who watches her like his money; though still rather with the mistrust of avarice than of love. The character is happily conceived, and developed with much spirit ; but the very extravagance of his two foibles diminishes the probability of each, and renders the effect too disagreeable. The jealous miser makes himself so thoroughly contemptible, that his reformation, at the end of the play, is hardly to be accounted for by a miracle.

Among the most happy subjects for the display of the national absurdities is, doubtless, that of ostentation. In a country, where the censure of opinion falls very lightly on those who have no solid claims to esteem, riches form the readiest means of making an impression on the public. Goldoni caught the true spirit of a foible, which gives an air of happy ridicule to many of his comedies. Three of these are devoted to the subjects of *Le Villegiature;* the season passed in the country during the rural festivals ; and the author has succeeded in drawing a very ludicrous picture of the sumptuous display, peculiar to one month in the year, for which whole families are content to sacrifice the comforts and enjoyments of the eleven remaining months. Such exhibitions, however, of vices and absurdities have seldom much effect in eradicating them. I have been witness to a family lavishing its resources on a magnificent festival, given on the banks of the Brenta, in which they represented the piece, well entitled : *Le Smanie per la Villegiatura : The rage for the Fêtes Champêtres.* All the performers mutually ridiculed each other. The legal processes which had been served at their villa in the morning, left very little room, indeed, for illusion ; but so far did they disregard such a consideration, that they seemed to take pleasure in displaying their own characters upon their own theatre.

After the analysis we have just given of the different characters of Goldoni's comedy, it will easily be perceived how small is the share of fine feelings which they display. Indeed, the drama of this author is any thing but sentimental. His heroes and heroines are not those of romance; he gives them their full share of human foibles, and delights to make us laugh at their expense; displaying the egotism lurking in their generosity, the interested nature of their friendship, the envy mingled with their admiration, and throughout all, the dull, calculating, and vulgar part of human nature. This he accomplished with considerable address and wit, and with no slight knowledge of dramatic effect. He strongly excites our laughter, at the same time that we applaud the natural turn of the dialogue and of the characters. But we are not very sure that this is the sole object of comedy; and the feeling of weariness which we so soon experience in the perusal of Goldoni's plays, leads us to suspect that in all the productions of art, something of a more ideal character is required. The various actions of mankind, the objects which they have in view, their thoughts and their opinions, may all be considered in an opposite light, and tried by two very different rules. In the ideal world, we propose to ourselves only that which is most perfect and beautiful in its kind; in the real world, we consider what is most likely to turn out to our own advantage. Of these characters, the former class may be considered as poetical, and the latter as prosaic. The struggle between these antagonist qualities furnishes subjects equally good for the tragic, and for the comic muse; and it rests with the author to take part with the one or the other, as he feels most inclined to call forth our sympathy for those poetical beings withering in the frown of the world, or to amuse us with laughing at their ignorance of human affairs, and at their inability to make themselves understood by mere worldly men. But where no character of this elevated description appears in a comedy, we soon become weary of the narrow views and despicable opinions peculiar to the prosaic class. We begin to feel the want of a species of interest which we do not find; and to this aspiration after nobler sentiments, and more grateful feelings, may be attributed the revival of sentimental comedy, of domestic tragedy, of tragi-comedy, the melo-drame, and

romantic comedy, in different ways, upon the stage of every people.

But though Goldoni occasionally aimed at creating a sort of interest, it was rather in imitation of the intricacy of the Spanish *imbrogli*, and of the romantic comedy, where the incidents crowd upon each other, and the heroine only escapes out of one danger to rush into another, than upon the model of the French sentimental dramas, employed by his rival Chiari, that he sought to attract and to move the feelings of his audience. The best specimen which we possess of this kind, is in his *Incognita*. Rosaura is the daughter of a Sardian gentleman, who had been ruined in a family quarrel, which had already caused the effusion of much blood. His other children had all been assassinated, and he is himself in continual danger from the weapons of hired bravos sent in pursuit of him by his enemy. Both had been banished by the laws of their country; and the father of Rosaura had sought refuge, under a feigned name, in Naples; where he disguises himself even from his daughter, to whom he only appears as a friend of her family. Fresh dangers once more compel him to seek for safety in flight; he conceals his daughter in the cottage of a peasant in Aversa; and there the scene first opens upon us. A gentleman of the name of Florindo, *cavaliere servente* to Beatrice, wife of the intendant, falls in love with Rosaura at Aversa. She requites his passion, and is on the point of eloping with him, to avoid the importunities of Lelio, another admirer, who is the leader of those bravos and smugglers formerly so numerous in the kingdom of Naples. He disperses the force sent in pursuit of him; sets justice at defiance, and spreads terror through the neighbouring country. By the outrages and depredations of Lelio, the vindictive jealousy of Beatrice, the importunate warmth of Florindo, and the intendant's love of justice, Rosaura is involved in a series of adventures, carried away an infinite number of times and as often released, in such a way as to keep up a very lively degree of interest and curiosity. The character of Pantaloon, Lelio's father, and a respectable merchant of Venice, who alone retains any influence over his son, is of itself sufficient to support the interest of the piece. His conduct, under the most trying circumstances,

is represented as equally delicate, generous, and determined. We may, likewise, consider Goldoni as entitled to praise for having placed the scene of his comedies in the manners of a country, in every way so suitable for the representation of romantic adventures. It is there that we behold men enslaved by habits of effeminacy and sloth; or breaking through the restraints of society, to surrender themselves madly to their passions; living in open defiance of public order, and yielding no obedience to the despicable governments, whose yoke they have shaken off. We have there, likewise, seen, no later than the close of the sixteenth century, a sovereign prince, Alfonso Piccolomini, duke of Monte Mariano, become the chief of a horde of banditti, and continue his strange profession for more than a period of ten years. It was a circumstance of more common occurrence for the Neapolitan gentlemen to grant the use of their castles and estates, as a safe retreat for the banditti employed by them in their private quarrels; insomuch that the existence of these men, living in open defiance of the laws, and dreaded even by cities, which had suffered from their violence, was sufficiently real to admit of the introduction of scenes, similar to those of the *Incognita*, into the romantic comedy and the romances of Italy.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ITALIAN COMEDY CONTINUED: GOZZI; ALBERGATI; AVELLONI; FEDERICI; ROSSI; PINDEMONTI, &c.

GOLDONI is universally allowed, by the people of Italy, to be the great master of the comic stage; and his productions, identified as they are with the character and manners of the nation for which they were written, are always received with enthusiastic applause. I have frequently heard the representation of one of his pieces interrupted by the repeated cry of "*Gran Goldoni*," which was caught and re-echoed through all parts of the theatre. Yet his merit, however eminent in the natural and faithful delineation of manners,

and in the strain of gaiety that runs throughout, by no means conveys an idea of grandeur, or of transcendent genius. As we have before had occasion to observe, Goldoni was extremely provoked to behold his pieces made a subject of parody by Count Gozzi, and more so that his attempts had been received by the public with very general applause, though bestowed less, perhaps, on the happiness of the parody than on the fantastic productions in which it was contained. This gave rise to a literary quarrel, attended by two very remarkable circumstances. Goldoni became irritated to such a degree as to lead him to abandon his country and his native tongue. Retiring to Paris, he devoted his talents to the French theatre, producing pieces written in that language. With Gozzi it had likewise the effect of leading to a new style of comedy, by the introduction of those fairy dramas, which had such an astonishing run, during several years, at Venice, and which are now completely forgotten, except indeed by the Germans, who, on their revival, conferred upon Count Gozzi the title of the first comic writer of Italy.

The dramatists of the eighteenth century, who adopted the French drama as their model, invariably produced complete pieces for the stage. The company of which Goldoni had the management, undertook to give a faithful representation of the author's pieces: each performer engaging to observe his instructions, without interrupting the dialogue, for the sake of displaying his own extempore talents. This was a sudden and a serious check to the *comedy of art*, which, however loose and improbable, and often vulgar and indecent in its character, had discovered, in its original spirit, great energy and vivacity; those sterling qualities of the Italian drama, of which Goldoni availed himself, to give a lasting reputation to his name. It appears that one of the most distinguished companies of players, entitled *La Compagnia Sacchi*, each of which had supported, with surprising success, the character of the mask assigned to him, found itself, in consequence of the desertion of its poets, reduced to the last stage of wretchedness. These celebrated Pantaloons, Harlequins, and Columbines, in vain sought opportunities for a fresh display of their talents; and they now struggled against the influence of Goldoni's company, which, although

possessed. as it appeared, of much less sterling wit and originality, was yet too powerful to be met by open competition. Their indignation rose high against Goldoni, as well as against the Abbate Chiari, who, by aid of his pompous *versi Martelliani*, not only maintained his ground, but disputed the stage with his opponent, the Venetian advocate. Count Carlo Gozzi had declared himself in favour of the old national comedy, whose popular wit and spirit, he observed with concern, were fast disappearing. His fine musical taste had been long wearied with the recitation of the *versi Martelliani*, then admitted, for more than twenty years, upon the stage, in contempt of all Italian prosody; nor was his delicacy less wounded by the very inflated and perplexed style adopted by the Abbate Chiari, in imitation of Marini and the *seicentisti*. His national feelings were equally opposed to the authority assumed, in matters of taste, by the French writers. He, moreover, disliked their philosophy, and eagerly availed himself of an occasion to turn it into ridicule. In 1761, he presented the company of players, entitled *Sacchi*, with his dramatic sketch of the *Three Oranges*, leaving the subordinate parts to be filled up by the humour and imagination so abundantly displayed by these admirable actors; who, further inspired by the personal dislike which they felt towards the objects of their parody, played it with the greatest success.

The scene of the *Three Oranges* is laid in the kingdom, and at the court of the King of Diamonds, who appears in all his mock majesty and gravity, very exactly copied from his prototype in cards. Tartaglia, the hereditary prince of Diamonds, is in the last stage of melancholy, owing to the dark enchantments of a wicked fairy (the Abbate Chiari), who is destroying the prince by a slow poison of the *versi Martelliani*, drop by drop. The same fairy is in league with the ambitious knave of Diamonds, and with Clarice, the lady of his affections, representing, I believe, the queen of Spades, who flatter themselves with the hope of succeeding to the crown. Tartaglia has not the least chance of recovery, unless he can be made to laugh; and another enchanter (Goldoni) has dispatched Truffaldino, a black mask, to the court, who employs his art in tempting the prince to smile. So far, the piece was a direct and almost undisguised satire upon Goldoni and

Chiari. Their appearance on the stage was accompanied by a parody of their language, and the turn of their ideas; and the conceited and pompous manner of Chiari, and the technical phrases of Goldoni, were equally the object of ridicule. The remaining characters were all burlesques of the dramas of these two authors, and the malice of the actors took a secret pleasure in supplying the satire, of which the malice of the spectators was always ready to make the application.

But the author, having founded the idea of his parody upon an enchantment, naturally enough connected the action with that fairy world, so universally known. He selected a fairy tale of very general repute in Venice, most probably to be met with in the *Cabinet des Fèes*, entitled *The Loves of the Three Oranges.* Tartaglia, recovering from his melancholy by a sudden fit of laughter, is seized with a desire of undertaking the conquest of the *Three Oranges*, preserved in the castle of the fairy Creonta, whose history he had heard during his illness. His expedition for their discovery and conquest, with all the wonderful events which follow, were intended, by their author, as a series of satirical reflections upon different works of Goldoni and Chiari. While assisting at their representation, Count Gozzi was surprised to observe the pleasing effect of the supernatural portion of the spectacle upon the audience, which he had been so far from contemplating, that he had inserted it only by way of interlude, with little variation from the fairy tale in the manner that it is related by good housewives and beldams, to beguile their nursery hours. The fairy Creonta summons her dog: "Go, bite the thief who stole my oranges!" and the dog replies, "Why should I bite him? he gave me something to eat, while you have kept me here, months and years, dying of hunger." The fairy then turns to the well: "Rope, bind the thief who stole my oranges!" The cord, rising up, thus replies: "Why should I bind him who hung me in the sun to dry, while you have left me for months and years to moulder in a corner?" The fairy then commands the iron gate of the castle: "Crush the thief who stole my oranges!" but the gate replies, "Why should I crush him who oiled me, while you have left me here so long to rust?" Yet, during the whole of this dialogue, the audience was rapt in pleasure and attention, listening to a marvellous tale, known to every one before, and following it

with loud applause. But the admiration was at its height when Truffaldino came forward with fresh prodigies; and on cutting two of the oranges, there stepped forth two beautiful young ladies, who very soon died of thirst. On Tartaglia proceeding to cut the third orange, by the side of a fountain, a third princess made her appearance, to whom he lost no time in giving something to drink, as it appears she was destined, after many more adventures, to become his wife. She is transformed into a dove before the eyes of the spectators, and it is some time before she can again recover her natural figure.

It was thus accidentally, that Count Gozzi acquired a knowledge of the use which might be made of the love of the marvellous, and of the admiration of the people for deceptions and metamorphoses accomplished on a great scale, upon the stage; in a word, of the emotions which attend the revival of the early fictions familiar to our childhood. While the *Sacchi* company was thus replenishing its funds by repeated representations of *The Three Oranges*, Gozzi more seriously devoted himself to the new species of drama which he had just discovered. He selected for the stage all the fairy tales that appeared to him best calculated to produce a brilliant effect. He dramatized them, and gave them to the public, accompanied with such magnificence of decoration and surprising machinery, as did not fail to draw forth testimonies of its liveliest applause. The humour of the actors, and the animation and interest which the author contrived to throw into these time-worn fictions, gave them all the effect of a tragi-comedy equally interesting and amusing.

In many of these fantastic creations, Gozzi at once displayed the qualities of a poet and a man of wit. Of this, perhaps, the pieces entitled *The Lady Serpent, Zobeide, The Blue Monster, The Green Bird, The King of the Genii*, &c., might afford sufficient proofs. He avoided personal satire, in order better to sustain the serious portion of his subject. He seemed to have imbibed the very spirit of fairy fables; and if his tragi-comedy display too little resemblance to nature, it, at least, preserves the sort of probability we look for in a fairy tale. He no longer bounded his ambition to a mere outline, as he had before done in *The Three Oranges;* but divided his performances into the acts and

scenes o a regular tragedy, and composed the parts relating to the serious characters in iambic verse. To the extempore talents of the actors, the author confided only the five characters, in mask, of Pantaloon, Columbine, the Neapolitan Tartaglia, Truffaldino, (the Harlequin of others,) and Smeraldina, his sister, or the sister of Columbine. The scene was laid in unknown regions of the East, where the marvellous required to be limited only by the author's own imagination, and where he supposes five Italian adventurers, the masks, had just arrived to try their fortune ; referring the event to modern times, in order that he might lose none of the sources of amusement to be derived from allusions tc the manners of his contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. He had, likewise, sketched and prepared the particular scenes which he proposed to leave to the discretion of his *improvvisatori*, in such a manner as hardly to permit them to mistake the part assigned them, either in their style of language, in their peculiar sort of pleasantry, or in the general design of the whole. The more serious personages were invariably placed in very critical circumstances, for the purpose of creating sufficient interest and curiosity, sometimes in the adventures, and sometimes in the characters themselves. Their language was occasionally touching, inspired by kind and impassioned feelings, and expressed with a poetic warmth, which seemed to spring from the heart. Most frequently, however, the interest was kept alive by one astonishing incident crowded upon another, for the gratification of surprise and curiosity. We might almost be led to suppose, that the human faculties, beyond a certain degree of power, are destructive of each other, and that an excessive developement of the imagination is inconsistent with sensibility of mind. There is, for instance, no situation of a more affecting nature than in the *Zobeide* of Gozzi, yet its perusal, in all probability, never cost a single tear. The princess is carried off by a wicked enchanter, who, imposing upon her by his hypocrisy, has inspired her with a passion for him. This monster, whose name is *Sinadab*, never retains the same wife loi.ger than forty days ; after which time he transforms her into a heifer, and carries off another by the power of his magical art. Those who have resisted him are tormented, in a dismal cavern, with all the punishments he can inflict.

Zobeide has already arrived at the fortieth day, and the monster is resolved to destroy her.* But she has fortunately made an impression on the heart of Abdalac, the high priest of the country, no less powerful a magician than the king himself, and he endeavours to make the infernal incantations of the latter recoil upon his own head. He reveals to Zobeide the character of her husband, and the fate which is in reserve for her. He shews her, among the wretched prisoners in the cavern, who have resisted King Sinadab, her own sister and her half-sister; and the scene represented on the stage strongly resembles the character of Dante's Hell. One of these wretches is seen pacing the winding cavern, with her head in her hand, suspended by the hair; the bosom of another is made the prey of serpents perpetually gnawing at her heart; a third is seen half metamorphosed into a monster; and all exclaim with horror against the cruelty and excesses of Sinadab. No longer under delusion, Zobeide tears the image of the monster from her heart; but in order to escape his fury, she is obliged to conceal from him the discovery she has made. She has soon further reasons to detest him. Her father and her brother arrive, with an army, to her rescue; when Sinadab, by a new enchantment, so far changes their appearance, that, ignorant of each other, they engage in single combat, and the father is killed by his own son. Zobeide still disguises her feelings, and is invited by Sinadab to partake of a collation, where he proposes to give her the fatal cake which was to transform her into a heifer. But she adroitly takes care to substitute one of the cakes for another, and Sinadab himself is now transformed into a monster, a circumstance of which Abdalac avails himself, to break the whole of his enchantments, and to restore his captives to liberty. Few tragedies exhibit more terrific incidents than we meet with in *Zobeide:* where she discovers her own sisters among the victims of a husband she so much loved, and where Schemseddin, her brother, kills his father

* [It would appear that the English are little less indebted than the Germans to the fantastic drama of Gozzi, many of whose marvellous productions may be traced in the most popular after-pieces of the day, exhibited with all the supernatural embellishment and effect which the *King of the Genii*, and the great *Blue Beard* himself, so well know how to produce. *Tr.*]

in mistake. But so many marvellous events seem to leave no room for emotions of pity, either in the author or the spectator ; the former being too much busied in conducting new intrigues, to think of bestowing more than a few exclamations upon the most distressing occurrence, and in the tumult and crowd of incidents, losing sight of the effects which they ought to be made to produce upon the feelings of the audience. Although the versification can by no means be pronounced faultless, in regard to metrical rules, yet its chief failure is the want of elevation of style and expression ; and whilst the incidents tend to excite the attention, they in no way produce a lasting impression on the mind.

The comic masks had full as great a share in supporting the credit of these fantastic exhibitions, as the supernatural machinery itself. They were entitled, by their author, *Fiabe*, or *Fables*, from an old Italian word, nearly obsolete. The masks of Gozzi, however, have no sort of resemblance to those of the comedy of art. The ancient masks were chosen with a view to a general representation of the circumstances of real social life. Thus Pantaloon, the merchant ; the doctor of law, Balanzoni ; Captain Spaviento, the Spanish bully ; the busybody, Columbine ; the stupid valet, Harlequin, and so many others, were all taken from different conditions of society, in such a way as to give a sort of family picture, approaching as nearly to the original as possible. Their country, their situation in life, and their family, were all, like their characters, arranged so as to display an accurate representation of domestic affairs. But when once transported into enchanted regions, they no longer preserved their individuality ; and the distinction of situation, of language, and of country, between Harlequin, Columbine, and Pantaloon, when they arrive at Teflis, or at Samandal, is almost too trifling to be observed. They seem to have lost the recollection of their former condition, and have all the appearance of upstart adventurers, very much resembling each other. They are scarcely to be distinguished in Gozzi's productions ; which is chiefly to be regretted for the sake of the character of Pantaloon, whose appropriate qualities were an honourable testimony to the loyalty, simplicity, and good feeling of the old merchants of Venice. A tinge of ridicule attached itself to their manners, no less antique than the

fashion of their beard and dress; but a noble, generous, and even delicate conduct and deportment shone through this antiquated disguise.* The works of Gozzi fell into neglect on the separation of the *Sacchi* company, as no other troop remained which had been accustomed to extemporary acting, with the same ability and success. Indeed, Gozzi himself had contributed not a little to deprive the actors of their former spirit and invention, qualities which he nevertheless exacted of the performers, by altering the parts which had been assigned to them; and when divested of their individual character, they seemed to lose the associations and the inspiration which had facilitated the exercise of their peculiar talents.†

It does not appear that Gozzi's plays were ever represented upon other theatres than those of Venice; nor do they, in truth, represent the national spirit of the Italian people. We almost feel inclined, on their perusal, to refer them to a German, rather than to an Italian origin; and, indeed, they have been repeatedly published, and received with the greatest enthusiasm by the German people. Many of his pieces were translated, and acquired for Gozzi a reputation which has ever since made his name popular in Germany.‡ The taste for fairy fictions appears to have spread, however, no farther than Venice: they are neither to be met with in the peasant's hut, nor in the nursery, in other parts of Italy. They appear

* M. Camillo Ugoni, who published, in 1822, an excellent work on Italian literature, in the second half of the 18th century, justly remarks, that I ought to have made an exception in favour of *il corvo*, where Gozzi confers on Pantaloon a superb character; he relates in a lively manner the adventures of Gozzi, which were not a few, but he dwells also upon the Venetian patrician's dislike to public enlightenment and liberty.

† These extempore comedies continued to be played at Venice till within a very few years. In the theatrical journals, up to the year 1801, we frequently find mention of them as represented at the theatres of S. Angelo, S. Luca, and S. Gio. Crisostomo. Under the titles of *Comedies of Art*, we meet with *La Nascita di Truffaldino, I Personnaggi di Truffaldino, I Due Truffaldini, La Favola del Corvo*, &c. The names of the ancient masks are also inserted in these journals: such as, Pantaloon, Tartaglia, Harlequin, Columbine; but neither comedies of art, nor masks, appeared at so recent a period in other parts of Italy.

‡ The English translator of this work, Mr. T. Roscoe, by whose researches it has frequently been enriched, remarks that the theatre of Gozzi has had considerable influence on the mino drama in England. —*Author's note to last edition.*

to have taken refuge among the common people of Venice, with whom every species of fiction was in repute, and where it is made a regular profession to invent and to recite stories for the populace in the streets. As soon as the relater perceives that the interest is at its height, and that the curiosity of the people is excited without being gratified, he adroitly presents his hat to each of his audience, and raises a subscription before he proceeds with the catastrophe, which he gives out according to the price. Count Gozzi was one of the last writers of talent who produced his pieces in the sketch, and who aimed at preserving to his countrymen the extempore character of the old comedy. His theatrical reputation continued for ten or fifteen years in Venice ; but, while he obtained the applause of the people, all the men of letters, even those who had the least pretensions to the title, attacked him with the utmost critical virulence and animosity. They ridiculed his *Fables;* and without being at the trouble of entering into the merits of the subject, or of examining how far the efforts of a wild imagination may be made subservient to the expression of the feelings and to theatrical success, they endeavoured to expose the absurdity of such transformations and miracles, and the improbability of the fairy tales upon which they were founded. The modern Italians have also peculiar opinions relating to some points of supernatural belief. They entertain a particular dread of being suspected of lending the same faith to fairy tales and apparitions, which they are daily in the habit of displaying on the subject of new miracles, so frequently performed before their eyes. They seem to regard the fictions of the imagination with jealousy, as if they were afraid of being accused of childish weakness and credulity. The fact would appear to be, that their feelings are too much under the influence of supernatural alarm, to derive any degree of poetical pleasure from the subject. The dislike which they express towards the marvellous, in these creations of the fancy, pretty clearly proves how much their minds must be still imbued with the superstition which they so much dread.

Gozzi, however, yielded to the outcry which had been raised against him ; and by degrees, he relinquished the kind of drama which he had adopted. In the collection entitled, *Teatro moderno applaudito; The approved modern theatre,*

consisting of sixty volumes, not a single specimen of his fanciful productions has been admitted, although three of his subsequent dramas form a part of the selection. Two of these, *The Philosophical Princess* and the *Negro with a fair complexion*, are of a mixed kind; consisting of tragedy and comedy; of *Improvvisatori* masks, with the Venetian dialect; and of serious characters, whose dialogue is in verse. Gozzi, in these pieces, had merely substituted romance in the place of the marvellous; and he succeeded in effecting, by human causes, by the aid of heroism and of perfidy, those revolutions which are intended to gratify curiosity and to surprise the spectators. A fresh host of critics attempted to denounce this union of elevated sentiment and buffoonery, of heroism and gaiety, and of verse and prose; and very good reasons may certainly be alleged both in favour of, and against a species of innovation which brings Gozzi into comparison with Shakspeare; but these reasons should be drawn from an analysis of the faculties of the human mind, and from the sources of the imaginative arts. It was found easier, however, to appeal to rules: and the classical authority, which has been neither obeyed nor overthrown by the writers of Italy, was found sufficiently powerful for the condemnation of Gozzi. He had then recourse to the Spaniards, amongst whom he found writers who furnished him with models. A third production, which, under the title of *The Metaphysician*, really pourtrays a very amiable sort of personage, both in friendship and in love, is evidently borrowed from the Spanish theatre. Gozzi met with much the same success in this fresh undertaking, as the vivacity of his imagination had procured for him before. His dramas are far from being excellent in their kind; but they always possess a degree of interest, and much animation and wit. They have, moreover, a dignity and elevation of character, and a delicacy and nobleness in the sentiments and manners, very rarely to be met with in the Italian theatre, and which betray, at a glance, their Spanish origin.

We have, elsewhere, had occasion to observe that the Duke of Parma proposed prizes as the means of producing the best dramatic compositions. At the annual meetings, which took place about the year 1770, and were continued until 1778, several pieces of a superior character appeared, among

which those of the Marchese Albergati Capacelli, a Bolognese, were the most distinguished. One of these dramas, entitled *The Prisoner*, merited the laurel crown in the year 1774. The peculiar qualities of Albergati's dramas, which are pretty numerous, are the versatility, ease, and variety, which are every where discoverable, united to much delicacy of wit and good feeling. The play of *The Prisoner* consists of five acts, and is written in verse. The interest turns upon the affection of a man of rank for a lady wanting the advantage of birth, and the sufferings which they experience in consequence of the undue exercise of parental authority. Albergati was nearly the first writer in Italy who selected this incident for dramatic use; and he treated it with equal energy and sensibility. It was not long before he displayed talents, no less conspicuous in pure comedy. A man of the world, and conversant with the best society which Italy afforded, he employed the opportunities he thus enjoyed, to observe life and to describe it with impartiality and truth. His *Ciarlatore Maldicente, The Malicious Busybody*, is quite worthy of Goldoni, in the singular correctness of its characters, and in the spirit of the dialogue; while in point of lavish wit, and elegance of style, it may, perhaps, be pronounced to be superior. But we find little that is interesting in this comedy, any more than in those of Goldoni; Albergati, like him, borrowing his descriptions altogether from Italian manners, in which he must have been at a loss to discover any model either of poetical beauty or elevation of character. The spectator's indifference as to the consequences of a passion, of which the object is far from being deserving, leaves him little curiosity to know whether the quarrel of the lovers, originating in the malicious reports of the Busybody, will continue, or whether they will be reconciled at the expense of all their future comfort in life. The only real interest lies in the hope of seeing the author of the calumnies punished. But this motive is not sufficiently powerful to sustain the action of a piece, unless qualities of a more prepossessing nature are discovered in the victims of the treachery.

Many pieces, of the style of composition known under the name of *farce*, are from the pen of the same author; and they are justly ranked among the most amusing productions of

which the Italian theatre can boast. In these, Albergati had the art of uniting to national humour, and to the buffoonery of the old comedy, that elegance of manners peculiar to good society. The most successful, perhaps, was one entitled *Dei Convulsioni: Convulsions;* in which Albergati took occasion to rally those affected disorders of the nerves so fashionably prevalent about the end of the last century, and succeeded in deterring the voluntary victims from making them the pretence for further usurpation of authority over their husbands and their lovers; thus freeing the people of Italy from the new yoke with which they were threatened. Albergati was passionately devoted to the study of the drama, and was one of the founders of the patriotic theatre at Bologna, instituted with a view of introducing a more correct style of declamation among the players, by public specimens of elocution, in which his own histrionic talents were employed in throwing new light on the subject of dramatic composition. He distinguished himself, also, by his critical taste and acquirements, as appears from the remarks which he made upon his own works, and from his correspondence with Count Alfieri; and he undoubtedly deserves to be enumerated among those, who, without possessing any extraordinary degree of genius, contributed most to the perfection of the Italian theatre.

In consequence, however, of the increasing influence of French taste, and of the superficial philosophy so much in repute towards the end of the eighteenth century, the drama of Italy was wholly deprived of its original character. The principles contained in the Encyclopædia had not sprung up naturally in Italy; they had been transferred thither without being applied or understood, and were by no means agreeable to the feelings and opinions of the people. The disciples of the new philosophy proposed to substitute idle declamation, and the most futile arguments and opinions, in place of the ancient prejudices, which they flattered themselves they had exploded. The plays of Beaumarchais, of Diderot, and of Mercier, imbued with the modish spirit of this philosophy, made great impression upon the Italians; and the writers who appeared about the end of the century, universally endeavoured to imitate them. Francesco Antonio Avelloni, of Venice, surnamed *Il Poetino*, procured for himself a high reputation for comic wit, for which he was chiefly indebted

to the parts he borrowed from Beaumarchais. He had, indeed, the same object in view as the latter. He directed the ridicule of the lower orders of the people against their superiors in rank; making philosophers of lacqueys, and exposing the various abuses of the established order of things to the public eye. The character of Cianni, in his *Magic Lantern*, seems to be formed upon the model of *Figaro;* but *Il Poetino* is very far from displaying the wit and spirit which we meet with in Beaumarchais. Himself a comic actor, and as ignorant as the rest of his profession in Italy, he falls into egregious errors, whenever he ventures to lay the scene of action beyond the circle of his own experience. The character which he bestows upon his English and German personages is pitiable to the last degree; his men of learning are mere ridiculous pedants, and his philosophers are babblers, who never repeat any thing beyond a common-place. His acquaintance with society is equally despicable; he describes what never has been, and what is never likely to be; and his ideas of morality, honour, and honesty, on which all his heroes are modelled, are as much out nature as his heroes themselves. But enveloped, as he is, in clouds of ignorance, Avelloni is not without talent. The outline of his characters is good, and his dialogue excels in the qualities of nature, of vivacity, and sometimes of wit. His choleric personages are admirably brought out; and he displays considerable skill in the humorous description of the passion of anger in all its varieties. In the pettishness, the raillery, and the capricious manners of women, he is not easily surpassed. His comedy of *Mal Genio e buon Cuore: The bad Disposition and the good Heart*, is very attractive, and contains some good comic incidents; it is *The morose Philanthropist*, or more properly, *The good passionate Man.* The character is, perhaps, a little forced; although in a country where education is so much neglected, and society so lightly esteemed, we ought not to be greatly surprised to meet with men whose violence of character is little short of that of the Cavalier Ardenti. In regard to the instances of generosity with which he has attempted to redeem it, we must bear in mind, that poets and romance writers have always claimed the right of disposing of the purse of their ideal heroes with boundless munificence. A very remarkable, but very general trait of

excellence in the comedies of Avelloni is the correctness of their dramatic perspective; the art of exhibiting each character in such an exact and proportionate point of view, that it may only be seen as far as it is required, and without throwing the other characters into shade. The *Homicide in the cause of Honour*, another of Avelloni's works, is quite in the manner of the sentimental comedy. The plot of the piece is interesting, and many of the characters have the recommendation of novelty; and in particular that of a domestic who is jealous of her mistress, and who watches in order to cross her in her amours; as well as that of the Marchese Amadoro, which has frequently made its reappearance on the Italian stage. The marquess is a very lively, jovial, clever fellow, who has nothing more at heart than gaiety, good cheer, and the comforts of peace and contentment, yet is not without a strong fellow-feeling for the sufferings of others. He is a warm friend, and does not fear to risk his own safety in the service of others; displaying that degree of activity in doing good which he before seemed to have devoted entirely to pleasure. Such a character is very far from being naturalized in France; where the love of pleasure, which is, perhaps, never free from a mixture of vanity, corrupts the heart, encourages egotism, and in its absorbing principle of self-love, rarely discovers any feeling for others. But the Italian species of *bons vivans* have more resemblance to overgrown children than to profligate rakes; and the model thus drawn is doubtless national, since we see so many copies of it extant. We may observe that the sentimental *bons vivans* of the new comedy are all traced upon the same model, in the same manner as the characters of Pantaloon and Columbine are every where the same, in the ancient. They all speak the same language, and are represented with the same accent, and peculiar manners and gestures, by the actor who is always called the *Caratterista;* and we are almost inclined to regret that they do not every where appear under the same name and mask.

The *Homicide in the cause of Honour* would have really been a very interesting production, had the author enjoyed the advantage of a more intimate acquaintance with the world, with the laws of honour, and with the military laws, upon which he modelled his piece. He might very easily

have contrived to make the old Lascari, though certainly guilty in a military view, altogether innocent at the bar of conscience. An old gentleman, reduced to extreme distress through the extravagance of his son, engages himself as a common soldier, and is placed under the command of a sergeant, who had formerly been a servant in his family. This man avails himself of his authority to add to the misfortunes of his former master. He sometimes irritates him by sarcastic observations; at others. by more flagrant insults, and ends by chastising him with his cane. Lascari defends himself with his bayonet, and kills the sergeant on the spot. He is then condemned to death; and the king, on being informed of all the circumstances, thinks him an unworthy object of his mercy; while he himself declares that his crime has covered him with eternal disgrace, and that he wishes to die, in order to escape the excess of his remorse. We cannot but be sensible of the extravagance of all this: the provocation given is too severe; the retaliation is too strongly called for; and the remorse has too little foundation in justice to be natural. The interest fails from the very circumstance of the author having so much overcharged it. The truth is that, in general, the minor Italian dramatists undertook to give an account of more than they had ever seen, and of more than they knew; of courts which they had never visited, and of foreign countries where they had never travelled. Fortunately for them however, they were blessed with spectators still more ignorant than themselves, who invariably received their counterfeits as original portraits, for the sole reason that they differed from every thing which they had witnessed of the same kind before.

Of the sentimental pieces, which attracted the greatest public applause in Italy, several were borrowed from the French, English, and German romances. A new *Werter* appeared from the pen of Anton Simone Sografi, a writer of some repute; and a Neapolitan, of the name of Gualzetti, produced a series of these dramas founded on the History of the Count de Comminges, which does not reach its conclusion until the end of the third piece. Few pieces have been more frequently played, or are received with a greater degree of pleasure, than these three dramas upon the Italian stage. The second, entitled *Adelaide married,* is a particular

favourite, though it is far from being free from those peculiar defects of which the sentimental school has been long accused; defects arising out of a total ignorance of the national manners of other countries, and of the laws of true honour. The Coun de Comminges contrives to introduce himself into the house of a lady of whom he is enamoured, and, without seeing her, engages himself as a painter in the service of the Marquis of Benavides, her husband, submitting to the greatest indignities, and falling upon his knees when he is threatened with chastisement, to beg his master will not, by dismissing him, deprive him of all hope of obtaining his bread. It is this total want of dignity in the dramatic heroes of the Italian stage which deprives them of the interest we might otherwise feel in this species of composition. Contempt is too strongly mingled with our pity; and we almost reproach ourselves for sympathizing with characters which we cannot esteem, until we recall to mind the utter improbability of their existence. The illusion in a moment ceases; and we only behold before our eyes a poet who has proved himself to be a very poor painter of human nature.

Pamela is another story which has furnished the Italian dramatists with new materials for comedy, and Goldoni has drawn from it no fewer than three successive plays. The Abbate Chiari, in the same manner, extracted three more from a romance, of which he was very probably the author, entitled *Fanni Nubile, Fanni à Londra, Fanni Maritata.* The Cavaliere Giovanni Greppi likewise produced three connected dramas, between the same personages, and with the scene laid throughout in England. They are called *Teresa e Claudio, Teresa Vedova,* and *Teresa e Wilk. Tom Jones* and *Clarissa* have also figured upon the Italian boards, as well as an innumerable list, whose pretensions both to English names and to English manners would be quite as applicable to the meridian of China or Japan. The *Count of Belphegor,* originally from the pen of Machiavelli, has furnished a tolerably good comedy; but it was here thought advisable to lay the scene in a country of reprobates, the only place where such personages could be presumed to live at their ease, free from the importunities of magistrates and priests. Geneva was therefore fixed upon; and it is at Geneva that the Devil is supposed to arrive, provided with

ample recommendations to the *prince* of the city; that he is likewise supposed to enter into the holy estate of matrimony, and, driven to despair by the bitter temper of his lady, to regret his ancient residence below.

But, perhaps, the most distinguished farce writer of Italy was Camillo Federici, a Piedmontese actor, who, as I have been informed, owed his education to the Jesuits. He afterwards made many long tours with his company, in the course of which he obtained some acquaintance with the German theatre, more particularly with the drama of Kotzebue, many of whose pieces he attempted to naturalize at home. These, while they discover much less talent and knowledge of the world, retain all the peculiar qualities and defects of the German poet. He wrote a considerable number of comedies of the mixed kind, which are entitled by the French *drames*. But he rarely excites our laughter by the sprightliness of his wit, or awakens our sympathy by the pathos he displays. The chief attraction of his comedy consists in the force of the incidents and situations. The dialogue is, for the most part, dull and monotonous, without being natural; his pleasantries are severe; and when he aims at sentiment he is most frequently pedantic or affected. His plots, however, are, in general, striking and new; and, in the conduct of his little romance, the interest depends more upon curiosity, and upon humorous and unexpected surprises, than upon sentiment. One of the most popular of his productions is, perhaps, *I falsi Galantuomini: The pretended Men of Worth;* the subject of which, however, is a little stale. It is that of a sovereign arriving unexpectedly in one of his cities, lately added to his empire, to observe, incognito, the conduct of his subaltern officers, and the perfidy and egotism of all ranks; rewarding each, in conclusion, according to his deserts. Residing in a country divided into a number of sovereign duchies, Federici selected a sovereign duke for his hero. He fixed upon the Duke of Burgundy, whom he represents as residing at Dijon, wholly occupied with the cares of state, and with the promotion of the welfare of his subjects. This nero, of the most pacific disposition possible, is, we are surprised to find, no other than Charles the Bold. Federici appears to have had a very limited acquaintance with the history of other times and nations, for which we could have

more readily pardoned him, if he had displayed a more intimate knowledge of the human heart. But his *Falsi Galantuomini*, his pretended Men of Worth, are surely the most impudent rogues that were ever brought forward upon the stage. Not having sufficient skill to present us with a complete exemplification of their principles within the dramatic period allowed to him, the author has made such an inartificial display of them in their discourse as would not fail to render villains in real life very harmless characters indeed. An advocate informs the duke, whom he does not recognize, of the injustice of many of the causes in which he is engaged, and of the means which he proposes to try in order to render them successful, either by false witnesses, or by documents as false. A physician next assures him, that his object is to restore only the more wealthy ranks of society to health ; as it is, in fact, a charity to permit the others to die, being the last chance the poor have of escaping from their sufferings, in being quickly despatched into another world. The president, or chief justice of the place, commits himself still more imprudently, by betraying a very atrocious case of conspiracy, by which he had effected the ruin of an unfortunate treasurer, and had reduced him to the point of death, for the purpose of seducing his wife. We may here observe, that besides the capital error of having made all these villains so boastful and imprudent, Federici has also fallen into that of drawing the whole of his characters in *chiaroscuro*. They are all light or all shade : we find only very atrocious crimes, or the most shining virtues. Thus seven monsters of iniquity and four perfect characters are contrasted ; and among the last, is a peasant, whose virtuous qualities are even more marvellous than the vices of the others. Here we behold good faith without a taint of suspicion, generosity beyond bounds, and all the virtues carried to perfection. The sovereign, with the character which is ascribed to that rank by comic authors, is a model of perfect justice, of elevation of mind, and of zeal in the cause of virtue. At the conclusion, he disposes of every thing in a very summary and arbitrary manner ; and the fortunes, the liberty, and the lives of all the personages concerned, are regulated according to his good will and pleasure, and to the infinite satisfaction of the audience. It is thus that comic writers have always approved themselves

the stanch friends of despotism. The developement of an intrigue always proceeds more pleasantly and rapidly when a dictatorial character appears, to dispose of the liberty and the lives of the rest, without the tedious process of consulting the forms of law ; and as the retributive justice of the theatre is always in unison with the wishes of the spectators, their reiterated applause attends every fresh abuse of authority which Mussulmen themselves would be ashamed of admitting into their administration. Yet, in the midst of these glaring faults, we are in justice bound to confess, that the representation of the *Falsi Galantuomini* is invariably attended with feelings of pleasure. There is something singularly happy in the subject, although so often repeated, of royalty in disguise ; and in the continued contrast afforded, between the unsuspicious confidence of these wicked subjects, and the gulph of destruction which we see opening at their feet. We seem to lose our own feelings as spectators, in those of the judge, who is a spectator also. Like him we feel aware of the importance of each casual word, thus incautiously pronounced; and the degree of interest which he takes in each instance is precisely the measure of our own.

There is another piece from the pen of Federici, which is likewise frequently played with great success. It is called *I Pregiudizi de' paesi piccoli: The Prejudices of small Towns;* and, in its character, it is not very unlike the preceding one. The idea is borrowed from the travels of the Emperor Joseph, in which he appeared incognito, and from the amusing blunders which the vanity of the people led them to commit in the royal presence. As the author did not venture to name an individual sovereign of modern times, he confers upon his character, in some of the editions, the name of Albert, and in others, of Sigismond. We possess also, in French, *The Little Town* of Picard, and, in German, *The Little Town* of Kotzebue, of which the latter bears the most striking resemblance to that of Federici, first represented at Turin, in the year 1791. The successive perusal of these three comedies must be extremely curious, by affording us a comparison between the national foibles presented by each of these authors upon the stage, from which the character of the three nations would be seen in a very striking point of view. The productions of Federici, however, have none of

the originality indicative of a native growth. As he sought rather for fresh novelties to entertain his company than for reputation and fame, he rejected nothing, and scrupled not to avail himself of the literary property of others; advancing no pretensions to originality, and only desirous of securing sole possession of the pieces which he had thus borrowed from resources not his own. I have read an *Elvira of Vitry*, or, *The speaking Hat*, with his name attached to it; but though I have not been able to trace it to its real author, I can scarcely persuade myself that it is his. The dignity of the characters, the refinement of the sentiments, and a certain judgment and propriety, which no mere comedian, unacquainted with the best society, could have displayed, render it altogether too pleasing a production to be attributed to Federici. The story is that of a married lady, who, while her conduct is perfectly correct, has indulged a secret attachment for a young officer, in consequence of which she is betrayed into several imprudent steps. The officer is discovered to be her own brother, of whom she had retained no recollection; and the love by which she is supposed to have been actuated, is nothing more than the sisterly affection originating in confused and tender remembrances of their childhood. But her remorse, her sufferings, and the jealousy of her husband, are all delineated with a degree of delicacy and honourable feeling seldom to be met with on the Italian stage.

Federici may be said to belong to our own age; his death having taken place only a few years ago. He had a son named Carlo, who embraced the same profession, and their works are frequently confounded together. The son, however, had a more extensive acquaintance with the history and manners of other people, and we may discover traces of more elevation and truth of character in his writings. Many Italian dramatists of our own days, dissatisfied with the mixture of sentiment and of pathos which they met with in the drama of Federici, have attempted to replace sentimental comedy by what is termed domestic tragedy. They endeavoured to disguise the want of dignity of character in their personages, by investing them with more daring and perverse natures, and by placing them in more terrific situations; thus flattering themselves that they were imitating

the English and Spanish writers, and becoming disciples of Shakspeare and of Calderon, when, in truth, the only approach which they made to the spirit of these mighty masters, was the mistaken sacrifice of their own national taste. However strict our dramatic laws may appear, it will be found far easier for mediocrity of talents to conform to them, than in any degree to attain the living truth and sublimity of Shakspeare, or the brilliant poetry of Calderon; and those authors set out under no very favourable auspices, who strive to emulate their genius, by first renouncing the laws of consistency and good taste. We have an example, in Giovanni di Gamera, of these self-imagined imitators of Shakspeare, who have never perused, far less appreciated, the excellences of that great poet. The language of Gamera is not mere prose; it is prose at once the most dull, conceited, and unmeaning, that his characters can be made to utter. We behold atrocities accumulated upon atrocities, but they are all of a despicable description; and, contrasted with those of Macbeth and of Richard III., which strike us with terror while they fascinate our gaze by the gigantic grandeur of their savage heroism, they produce only a feeling of disgust bordering upon horror, emanating from characters whose meanness is equalled only by their cruelty. His *Guilty Mother*, which can pretend to no sort of competition with that of Beaumarchais, is, perhaps, the most wretched production ever exhibited upon any stage; and if such a labyrinth of crime for a moment excites an interest or attracts attention, the reader and the spectator have, equally, reason to blush for the feelings thus indulged.

The popular admiration of these comedies still maintains its ground in Italy, among those classes who are accustomed to feel no sort of interest in the regular drama, and who love to indulge strong emotions, without asking themselves in what manner they are produced. But the most distinguished authors and critics seem now agreed to explode the sentimental style of comedy; many of our own contemporaries devoting their talents, perhaps with less success, but with considerably more merit, than these minor dramatists, to the Italian stage. The most deserving among these, is Gherardo di Rossi, a Roman gentleman, who has presented the public with four volumes of comedies, and many very pleasing pieces in verse. In his

comedies, he has succeeded in giving a correct description of the character and manners of his nation, as well as in catching the peculiar faults and foibles of the society in which he lived. We every where trace the hand of a man of taste and of one possessing a familiar acquaintance with the world. Of superior birth to most of the comic writers, whose productions we have just mentioned, his attainments are likewise of a higher order. In liveliness of imagination and in elegance of language, he far surpasses his predecessors. But his satire, unfortunately, has too much severity in it to pass for mere humour, and his characters are either too mean or too vicious to deserve our sympathy. To this we must undoubtedly attribute the little popularity which has attended his productions, although they discover greater powers of imagination, wit, and truth, than those of any other comic writer of Italy.

In the true spirit of comedy, Gherardo di Rossi has aimed rather at sprightliness and wit than at sentiment, but he was happy only in that species of gaiety which depends more upon the incidents than upon the language. In the latter, although possessed of no ordinary powers of mind, he may be said to have completely failed. His comedies, on perusal, appear to very great advantage ; the characters have each their individual traits, and they are admirably brought out, both in point of contrast and collision. The incidents are equally unexpected and natural, and the satire is carried in the catastrophe to its very highest pitch. We wonder when we lay them down that we have not been more entertained; but the author is, in truth, not happy in those sudden turns and expressions, which seem to give the signal for universal laughter, and draw the applauses of the audience. The wit of Gherardo di Rossi is, indeed, too much the result of study, to meet with the success which more spontaneous effusions never fail to obtain.

Out of sixteen comedies, pretty equal in point of merit, I shall here select only one ; it is entitled *Le Lagrime della Vedova: The Widow's Tears*, and it may, at least, serve to convey an idea of this writer's manner. The countess Aurelia is supposed to have just lost her aged husband, for whom she had entertained no affection while he was alive. Her time had been wholly devoted to romances ; and, with her mind full of what she had read, she resolves not to allow so favour

able an opportunity for the display of her sensibility to escape. She appears to be absorbed in mourning, grief, and despair ; and talks, and is incessantly occupied about raising a monument worthy of her deceased husband, in which she flatters herself with the hope of being shortly herself interred. Fainting fits and convulsions are next resorted to without intermission ; and the language in which she expresses herself is an amusing compound of high-wrought phrases and fragments of sentimental romances. Her brother-in-law, at whose house in the country she is residing, is completely the dupe of these high-flown sentiments ; but her sister regards them with more suspicion ; their very excess leading her to doubt that they are not very sincere. The former of these is a man who piques himself on his scientific acquirements, on his talents in physiognomy, and on the most recent discoveries in natural philosophy and the arts. Despising those whom he has reason to deem less accomplished than himself, he is nevertheless always open to the impositions of mere pretenders. He is, in particular, made the dupe of a projector of the name of Horace, who has obtained a footing in his house, and who influences him in the conduct of his affairs. This man proposes innumerable speculations, each more ridiculous than the former ; till at last he succeeds in stripping him of his fortune, under the pretence of enriching him. The lady, on the other hand, under a calm exterior is very sarcastic and accute. She is sensible of the foibles of her husband, penetrating into the character of the roguish projector, and into the affected sensibility of her sister, all of whose peculiarities she rallies, while she prepares the spectator for what is next to appear.

During the lifetime of her husband, it seems, the countess Aurelia entertained a *cavaliere servente*, of whom the old gentleman was excessively jealous. He was an officer ; and, about the time of the baron's decease, having a gambling quarrel with his colonel, in which the latter was wounded, he had been obliged to seek his safety in flight. He takes refuge in the very place where the scene of the plot is laid, little expecting to meet the object of his attentions. In the disguise of a peasant, accompanied by his servant, he solicits employment from a farmer, until he can find an opportunity of reaching the adjoining frontier. Here his situation becomes

very perplexing, the country being infested with deserters who are closely pursued by the military; and the captain is in hourly danger of being taken. But, while the servant is devising means for his master's safety, the captain's thoughts are wholly taken up with the lady, with whom he has frequent interviews, in the same dark cypress avenue where she is about to erect a monument to the memory of her late husband. Here, affecting the utmost conjugal despair, she informs her lover that he must leave her, never to return, for that the image of her beloved husband impressed upon her heart, destroying every other feeling, leads her to consider it a crime even to listen to him. The captain humours the romantic folly of her feelings; his language is also that of love and despair; and he threatens every moment to surrender himself to the officers who are in pursuit of him. But his own domestics and those of Aurelia provide for his safety; and, in order that he may avoid the general pursuit already begun, they propose that he should avail himself of the passport of her late husband, to which the countess herself consents. But he must assume the appearance of the deceased; and the lady supplies him with her husband's wardrobe. Nor is this enough; in the passport, the deceased is described as setting out on his travels with his wife and servants; and Aurelia, without any diminution of her romantic tenderness and lamentations, gives her hand, and consents to elope with the captain for the laudable purpose of ensuring his escape. They are both arrested and taken back; and the captain is brought before the major of the regiment, by whom he is informed, that the affair is less serious than it might have been; that the colonel is recovering; and that he will escape with a year's garrison-duty for punishment.

There are sufficient materials in this comedy for three or four, and there are at least as many characters powerfully and distinctly drawn. Such is that of the Marchese Anselmo, the master of the house, of his wife, of the countess, and of the projector. The number of the characters, however, lessens the interest we feel, while it injures the effect derived from dramatic unity and perspective. In works whose object is chiefly the display of character, it is of importance that only one of the figures should stand very prominently forward, and that the others should be thrown into shade, so as merely to

give relief to the principal in the eye of the spectator. Rossi strongly exemplifies the necessity of this rule. He abused the talent which he possessed for the discrimination of character, in such a way, that, by dividing the interest and directing the attention successively to each of the characters, he failed in concentrating them in any.

Another Roman gentleman, but of French extraction, Count Giraud, has very recently pursued the same career, in the line of true comedy. His dramatic talents display a curious combination of the qualities peculiar to the two nations to which he may be said to trace his birth; his productions exhibiting as much of the Italian good nature as of the finesse of the French. His plots are conducted with a spirit and rapidity peculiar to the people of the South, whilst his characters, in the midst of the most ridiculous situations, always preserve a tone of dignity, which French taste can never be altogether content to resign. Giraud is the most recent of all the comic writers, dating his labours only from the nineteenth century, and having already procured for himself a very extensive reputation. His productions have been received with eagerness by the different comic managers; even by such as have failed to render justice to the merits of Rossi. Indeed, they are nearly the only specimens of a truly comic description, which are now brought forward upon the theatres, giving an agreeable relief to the monotonous sentiment of the other dramatists. One of the most pleasing, perhaps, in point of humour of incident and animation of dialogue, is his *L'Aio nell' imbarazzo: The Tutor in a Dilemma.* Although the perusal of this piece may fail to produce the same degree of amusement as we derive from *Le Lagrime della Vedova*, yet its exhibition has far greater charms for the spectator, because its gaiety consists not so much in its wit as in the turn of the words, in the incidents, and in that surprise which electrifies a whole audience. Thus, when the tutor is admitted into the confidence of his pupil, who had contracted a secret marriage a year before, he finds himself compelled, within a few hours, to conceal the lady in his own chamber, to avoid the vengeance of the suspicious and irritated father of the youth. Being afterwards unable to release her from this situation, he is, likewise, under the necessity of going in search of the infant, which he brings

concealed under his cloak; and the moment in which the father surprises him, and finds a young child carefully wrapped up in the old tutor's arms, produces, perhaps, one of the happiest results ever witnessed on the comic stage. The sprightliness of the language is, also, well adapted to the humour of the incidents, without diminishing the interest and pathos of the piece. Giraud has the perfect art of catching the feelings of his audience, of which his comedy of *The Prior of Cerreto*, in which humorous incidents are very happily combined with the tenderest feelings and the most alarming events, affords a striking proof. No modern author, devoting his genius to the theatre, has yet appeared, whose efforts, in favour of the Italian comedy of the nineteenth century, promise happier results.

We next approach another of our contemporaries whose talents, neither of a strictly comic nor tragic order, have frequently found employment for the theatres of Italy. He is far, however, from sustaining the same degree of reputation in the closet, which he acquired upon the stage. The Marchese Giovanni Pindemonti is a native of Verona, but now residing at Milan. In 1804, he presented the world with four volumes of *Dramatic compositions*, as he is pleased to denominate them, in order to shelter them from the sterner frowns of criticism, which might have assailed them under the higher title of tragedies; as well as to decline the authority of Aristotle. A few of these, however, have attained to a reputation seldom awarded to the best tragedies. Pindemonti is a complete master of dramatic effect; he seizes the imagination by the splendour of his theatrical imaginary; he animates and takes possession of the stage; and he is, in almost every sense, the reverse of his contemporary Alfieri, whose productions will form the subject of the two succeeding chapters. In the same proportion as Alfieri may be said to have exhibited the bones of tragedy, by restoring it to its simplest elements of form and verse, and by keeping one undivided object in view, Pindemonti sought to adorn it by circumstantial and outward pomp; by every thing that can captivate the senses, and by all the variety and number of characters which contribute to render the impression more complete. His more tender and impassioned feelings are delineated with much energy and truth; while he sought to give expression to that love of civil

and religious liberty, of which he had been the friend and the martyr under the old government, by giving it new life upon the stage. In this last point, however, he is somewhat too verbose and declamatory; diverging into tedious and repeated speeches, which are not sufficiently charged with matter, nor very much to the point. The variety of objects which he embraces required more poetical powers to give them a picturesque effect. In this, as well as in the harmony of his numbers, he is deficient; while marks of haste and obscurity, owing as much to an extreme conciseness as to a faulty construction, must be considered among the defects peculiar to this author; which are, however, amply redeemed by the interest infused into his subject, and by the originality of mind which led him to pursue a career before unknown to the Italians.

No single production of Pindemonti seems to have attained greater celebrity than his *Ginevra of Scotland*, borrowed from Ariosto. It exhibits a striking similarity to the *Tancred*, of Voltaire, boasting those attractions of a chivalric character, and all that magic belonging to the good old times, which still assert their powerful influence over our feelings. The revolting character of Polinesso, who introduces himself into the chamber of Ginevra, so as to be seen by Ariodante, whom he has placed in view, for the purpose of defaming the character of that princess; and the meanness of Dalinda, who receives, in the dress of her mistress, the visit of Polinesso, and thus promotes the stratagem, give rise only to feelings of disgust. The whole plot is altogether too improbable; while Rinaldo's protracted speeches give an air of tameness and frigidity to the conclusion of the piece. A few scattered scenes and incidents, however, are fraught with deep tragic interest and beauty; and we cannot fail to be struck with the character of Ginevra, throughout the whole of the fourth act. Condemned and abandoned to her fate, under the most suspicious appearances, she still asserts a pride and purity of innocence which support her father, and dissipate all his fears. Ariodante arrives, in the same manner as Tancred, in quality of her champion, clad in black armour which completely conceals him from view. The accused lady is then left alone with her true knight, who, though fully convinced of her guilt, cannot resist coming forward in her behalf, consoling himself only with the

thoughts of dying for her. This situation is, perhaps, one of the finest ever presented on the stage.

GINEV. Since thou hast resolved
Nobly to risk thy name in my behalf,
Thou art, I trust, persuaded of the wrong,
False, shameless wrong, done to my virgin fame:
Never did lance grace juster cause than mine,
In champion's hand, and if Heaven do, indeed,
Prosper its righteous judgments in the strength
Of battling heroes, know, thou shalt come forth
A wreathed conqueror!
ARIOD. (Ye Gods! what boldness!) (*Aside*)
GINEV. But 'tis idle here
To give such hopes a tongue. Now, noble sir,
Since ancient custom so doth authorize,
Let me avail me of these moments granted,
Meekly to beg one boon of my protector.
ARIOD. Say on—
GINEV. I know the order of the king, my father,
Doth yield me up a guerdon to the conqueror;
Thine shall I be, so thou wipe off the stain,
The undeserved aspersion of mine honour.
I know, alas! thou may'st enforce thy wishes;
But oh! if thou be generous as thou seemest,
By all the warmest prayers by woman utter'd *

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* GINEV. Poiche imprendesti
Con magnanimo cor la mia difesa,
Ben cred' io, cavalier, che dell' atroce
Che al mio pudor vien fatto, enorme torto,
Persüaso sarai. Sappi soltanto
Ch' unqua da alcun campion più giusta causa
Non fù protetta, e che s' è ver che il cielo
Il divin suo giudizio manifesti
Di prodi eroi nelle battaglie, certo
Tu sarai vincitor.
ARIOD. (Che audacia!)
GINEV. Or vano
Saria su ciò spender parole, e invece
Permetti, O cavalier, giacchè il costume
Spazio di favellarti a me concede,
Che farti io possa un umile preghera.
ARIOD. Favella pur.
GINEV. So che in vigor del bando
Dal re mio padre pubblicato, io sono,
Signor, conquista tua. Poichè avrai tolta
L' immeritata macchia al nome mio,
Tu mi puoi posseder. Ma, poichè sei
Si generoso, coi più caldi voti
Io ti scongiuro a non voler del tuo

Giusto

In sorest need, I do beseech thee pause,
And spare what is thine own. Take wealth, take honours,
All the rich dower, with which my royal father
Hath portion'd me; but leave my wretched self
Freely to weep; for know, I could not love thee.

ARIOD. How!—

GINEV. Nay, be not offended!—

ARIOD. (*aside.*) (Shameless! Yet,
Yet loves she Polinesso.) Listen, lady;
Know you what 'tis to love?—

GINEV. Alas, I do.

ARIOD. Then wherefore doth your guilty lover loiter?
Why leaps not forth his lance in thy defence,
For whom thou erred'st and weep'st?

GINEV. Oh God! he cannot!
Lowly he lies in the wide waters buried,
A wretched prey to monsters of the deep;
Yet is there now a lofty spirit beaming
From out those mortal spoils, in the blest heavens,
Where all my love is garner'd. But, perhaps,
The fame of youthful years, the gallant bearing
Of his proud country's shield, of Ariodante,
(O worshipped name, sole care and sole delight),
Are all unknown to you. Now hark! He rush'd

Giusto diritto usar. Tienti gli stati
E le dovizie che assegnommi in dote
Il genitor, e in libertade amara
Non t' incresca lasciar donna infelice
Che non potrebbe, anche volendo, amarti.

ARIOD. Come!

GINEV. Non ti sdegnar.

ARIOD. (Quanto l' indegna
Ama ancor Polinesso!) Amante, O donna,
Tu dunque sei?

GINEV. Lo sono.

ARIOD. E perchè dunque
L'amante tuo, che sarà forse stato
Dell' error tuo cagione, in tua difesa
Non s' arma?

GINEV. Ah no, Signor, un cener freddo,
Un inutile spoglia in mezzo all' acque
Sommersa, e forse miserabil pasto
De' pesci in questo istante, un' alma bella
Trapassata agli estinti è il solo oggetto
Del mio tenero amor. Non so se mai
Giunto all' orecchio tuo d'Ariodante,
Nobil garzon, prode guerrier, sostegno
Di questo stato, e mia delizia e cura,
Il nome sia, nome adorato! Ei corse
Volontario a sommergersi nel fiume;

Perchè

And madly plunged into the waves. They say—
I know not—but they say it was for me.
As Heaven shall judge my soul, I do aver
I was not false—no! even in thought, I was not
False to his love. Oh, you would pity me,
Did you but know the mingled love and grief
That tear my heart, whose unstanched wounds still bleed
With bitter memories of that one loved name,
Round which my bounden fealty clings till death,
Yet am I grateful for the generous aid
Afforded, for the sake of my fair fame,
Far more than life, worse than a burden now.
Should other means be wanting, yet a life
Of living death will kill, though lingering long.
Then, kind as brave, complete your glorious task;
Relieve my woes; snatch me from infamy!
Oh, fight and conquer! Then, most merciful,
Plunge your victorious sword into my bosom.

ARIOD. (*Aside*) (Eternal Heaven, though certain of her guilt,
What soul-subduing words! They look like truth.
And wherefore should she feign them to a stranger?)

GINEV. (What is he murmuring?) (*Aside*)

ARIOD. (It is most strange.— (*Aside*)
My heart is wrung with woe.)—Ginevra!

Perchè non so. Per mia cagion si dice,
Ed io non son rea d'un pensier che a lui
Volto non fosse. Oh cavalier pietoso,
Se tu vedessi questo cor! vi stride
Tuttora, e gronderà sangue in eterno
L' immedicabil mia doppia ferita
D' amore e di dolor. La sua memoria
M'è ognor cara ed acerba, e la mia fede
A raggiungerlo andrà fra l'ombre ancora.
La generosa aita tua m'è grata
Perehè da rea calunnia il mio pudico
Onor difeso sia; non perche salva
Sia la mia vita. Io vita aborro, e certo
Qualora a donna disperata manchi
Altra via di morir, di lunga morte
M' ucciderà l' ambascia. Or se alla tua
Dolce pietà, magnanimo guerriero,
Vuoi porre il colmo, e de' miei negri giorni
L' affanno alleggerir, combatti, vinci,
Salvami dall' infami, e poi m' uccidi.

ARIOD. (Onnipossente Nume!—Io so che è rea—
Ma quai parole incantatrici!—Oh come
Par vero quel dolor!—Ma qual cagione
Di tanto simular con uomo ignoto?)

GINEV. (Ei favella tra sè)

ARIOD. (Nulla comprendo—
E il cor mi sento lacerar)—Ginevra— GINEV.

GINEV. Say
You grant my prayer—one prayer, for all my woes:
Leave me but free!
ARIOD. 'Tis granted—all is granted.
GINEV. I thought no less. You have a noble heart,
And nobly have you done! Thus let me kneel
Low at your feet. (*Kneeling.*)
ARIOD. No, rise, Ginevra! Tell me, (*Raising her*)
Can you be innocent? Now, to your champion
Unfold your inmost mind!
GINEV. You too! My champion—
Do you too doubt me?
ARIOD. (O ye gods! what rage! (*Aside*)
What anguish!) Hark! who gave a cavalier,
At night, the meeting at her chamber windows?
Was it Ginevra?
GINEV. May Heaven's lightnings strike me
To dust, if ever I did quit my couch
A moment, where I laid my virgin limbs.
ARIOD. (I do believe her; for if this be falsehood, (*Aside*)
There is no truth. Yet have I not had proofs?
Such proofs? Oh, misery!) And do you say
You loved but Ariodante?
GINEV. As alive.
I loved him always, so I love him dead.

GINEV. Ebben, Signore, accordi al mio cordoglio
La grazia di lasciar libera questa
Misera destra?
ARIOD. Io tutto accordo.
GINEV. Ah meno
Non m' attendea da un nobil cor: concedi
Che a tuoi pié—(*inginocchiandosi.*)
ARIOD. (*Alzandola*) No; sorgi—Ginevra—dimmi,
Sei tu innocente in vero?—Al tuo campione
Tutto il tuo cor tu dei svelar.
GINEV. Tu dunque,
Tu, mio campion, puoi dubitarne?
ARIOD. (O Dio!
Che smania!—che martir!) ma nella scorza
Notte non accogliesti un cavaliero
Tu sul verone?
GINEV. Un fulmine del cielo
M' incenerisca, se le caste piume
Un solo istante abbandonnai.
ARIOD. (Chi mai
Non crederebbe?—Ah, se menzogna è questa,
Qual fia la verità!—S' io ben non fossi
Certo del suo fallir—Che pena!) E solo
Ariodante amasti?
GINEV. E come vivo

ARIOD. Ungrateful! No!
GINEV. What dost thou say?
ARIOD. (Ye gods! (*Aside*)
I shall betray myself! I cannot bear it;
'Tis death or something worse than death! Enchantress,
Thy spells are on me. I would dishelieve
What I have seen.)
GINEV. What is 't that troubles you?
Why speak you thus?—Why cast such terrible looks
Upon me now, from those stern steel-clad hrows?
Indeed, you fright me: wherefore do you groan,
As from your inmost spirit, and stifle sighs
That seem to shake your soul? Speak!
ARIOD. It is nothing.
Nay, what you've asked I granted. Leave me now.
GINEV. How can I leave th' assertor of my honour?
ARIOD. Away, away! you know not what you do:
Your sight is death to me.
GINEV. Alas, what say you?
(What phantom flits before me—things long past? (*Aside*)
If dead things come to life—what hope? what joy?
That voice—those looks!) Oh! tell me, noble warrior,
Art thou unhappy, like myself?
ARIOD. I am.

Io sempre l' adorai, l' adoro estinto,
Nè mai sarà ch' altri m' accenda.
ARIOD. Ingrata!
GINEV. Che parli tu!
ARIOD. (Cielo! che dissi! ah quasi
La mia smania crudel mi di discoperse—
Ahi lasso me!—Resistere non posso—
Morir mi sento—Essa m' incanta—E quasi
Mi faria niegar fede aghi occhi miei)—
GINEV. Cavaliero, che hai? Perche cotanto
Fra te stesso favelli? E quali sguardi
Slanci tu fuor dalla visiera? E d' onde
Quel cupo e sordo gemito, che invano
Nasconder tenti, e quel che sì ti scuote
Forte anelito il petto? Ah parla—
ARIOD. Nulla.
Quanto hramasti, io t' accordai, mi lascia.
GINEV. Ch' io lasci il mio prode campion?—Oh Dio!—
ARIOD. Lasciami, tu non sai quanto funesta
Mi sia la tua presenza.
GINEV. Ahimè!—Che dici!—
(Qual larva lusinghiera!—Ah, se dall' ombre
Tornassero gli estinti—se leggiera
Aura di speme—Il suon della sua voce—
Que' sguardi—Quelle smanie)—Ah cavaliero;
Infelice tu sei come son io?
ARIOD. Si! GINEV.

GINEV. I do beseech you, let me now behold
Your features. Oh, for pity!
ARIOD. No, you shall not,
Till death hath waved his pallid ensigns o'er them,
When battle's done.
GINEV. Are these your hopes of conquest?
ARIOD. Nay, I will fight; but victory crowns the just!
How may I conquer?
GINEV. In the righteous cause!
ARIOD. I—no, I cannot—What say'st thou? she trembles!
GINEV. The innocent tremble not.
ARIOD. I am—
GINEV. Who are you!
Quick! quickly tell me!
ARIOD I refuse no longer;
Ginevra, you will have it. Know— (*A trumpet sounds*)
GINEV. That sound!
ARIOD. I hear—I come! Ginevra, fare you well!
To battle and to death. (*He rushes out.*)
GINEV. For mercy, stay!
Tell me, at least—alas, alas! he's gone.

It was the great object of Pindemonti to bring before the eyes of his countrymen, the proud history of their country, and to infuse fresh spirit into the drama of Italy, by engrafting upon it the loftier character, and more heroic manners, belonging to the middle age. In his *Mastino de la Scala*,

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GINEV. Deh, ti scopri alfin, deh, il tuo sembiante
Mostrami per pietà.
ARIOD. No, nol vedrai,
Se non se tinto del pallor di morte,
Dopo la pugna.
GINEV. E così vincer speri?
ARIOD. Io con valor combatterò; ma vince
Chi difende ragion.
GINEV. Tu la difendi.
ARIOD. Io—no—non posso—che favelli!—trema.
GINEV. Non trema l' innocenza!
ARIOD. Io sono—
GINEV. Io voglio
Saper chi sei; ti scopri.
ARIOD. Io non resisto.
Ginevra—tu lo vuoi—sappi (*s' ode suonare una tromba*)
GINEV. Qual suono?
ARIOD. Ecco la tromba. Addio, Ginevra. Io vado
A pugnar, a morir. (*Parte veloce.*)
GINEV. Ferma, t' arresta—
Deh, dimmi almeno—Ei vola—
Ginevra di Scozia, Atto iv *Sc.* 9.

he transports us back to the times of Verona's highest power and splendour, in the thirteenth century. Three of his tragedies are founded upon the history of Venice ; consisting of *Orsa Ipato*, one of the doges, about the tenth century ; *Elena e Gerardo*, the subject of which is borrowed from the domestic annals of Venice ; and the *Coloni di Candia*, embracing the conspiracy against the Venetian Republic, which took place during the fifteenth century, and which is developed with singular dramatic skill and power. Indeed, in all these pieces, Pindemonti has shown no little art and judgment, in employing the associative power, which familiar names and well known objects, endeared to us from childhood, possess over our feelings, when our personal impressions are added to great national recollections, and when we learn to transfer our emotions, excited by existing objects in the natural world, into the world of poetry and romance.

Pindemonti has, likewise, produced a few dramas founded on Greek and Roman subjects. These are, *Agrippina*, *The Bacchanals*, *The Leap of Leucadia*, and *Cincinnatus*, all of which were represented with distinguished success, before they were given to the press. Nearly all these subjects are original, and display considerable inventive powers. But that which was, perhaps, among all his tragedies, the most strikingly new to Italy, is entitled *Adelina e Roberto*, or *The Auto da fé*. The noble assertion of religious toleration, and the hatred manifested towards the relentless ministers of a criminal tribunal, are clothed in words which seem to fall strangely, in the Italian tongue, upon Italian ears. The scene is laid at Brille, in the Low Countries, and under the government of the Duke of Alva. The chief characters consist of Roberto de Tournay, condemned for two years to the dungeons of the Inquisition ; Adelina his wife, and his father-in-law, both arrested as guilty of heresy, for expressing some degree of compassion towards Roberto. The holy Bishop of Brille is likewise introduced, a real protector of his flock, and the advocate of the oppressed, who in his attempt to save them, only compromises his own safety ; and the members of the dreadful tribunal of the inquisition are also brought upon the stage. The scene continues, nearly throughout, in the dungeons of the Holy Office, where the

circumstances of the trial, and the preparations for torture, are drawn with a force of reality which harrows up the soul. Poetry here appears despoiled of her sweeter graces and attractions, to give a more forcible and terrific expression of truth to the appalling features of religious persecution. The unrelenting sternness of the grand inquisitor, and the milder character of the grand vicar, are not, however, drawn with traits of hypocrisy. These personages are actuated by a blind fanaticism, which appears in all its native rage and cruelty. Indeed, the whole performance makes us thrill with horror, beyond even what is admissible in representation. It amounts to a degree of actual suffering ; while it threatens to overwhelm us with still more appalling realities, in the preparations for torture exhibited before our eyes The victims appear under condemnation, and their sufferings are about to commence, when the proceedings are interrupted by an occurrence which only permits time to prepare for the *auto-da-fé*. The victims now arrive at the place of execution ; the faggots are in readiness ; the dreadful malediction is just pronounced upon them, and they are upon the point of being delivered to the flames, when the soldiers of the Prince of Orange suddenly appearing, restore these unfortunate people, already arrayed in their *san benito*, to liberty and to life.

CHAPTER XX.

ALFIERI.

ITALIAN comedy had made a sensible progress towards perfection, during the eighteenth century. Voltaire has justly said of Goldoni, that his appearance on the stage might, like the poem of Trissino, be termed, Italy delivered from the Goths. The writers of whom we spoke in the last chapter, occupied the stage with him ; and amongst the directors of the theatres, and amongst the comedians, men of genius were occasionally found, who gave to the stage, pieces enriched with the ancient Italian gaiety. Thus, also, in our own time, a new kind of comic pantomime has been invented by the comedian Luigi del Bono. This is the Harlequin

of the Florentines, Stentarello. His coat, patched with sackcloth, bears marks of the wrappers and remnants of the shops, with which he has clothed himself; his language is empty and important, like that of the lower orders in Florence; he affects an eloquent mode of speech, and is embarrassed in the long periods he attempts; he is accustomed to parsimony and to boasting; nor do his gaiety and his folly bear any resemblance to the characters of the Venetian masks, though they are also performed extempore.

Tragedy, in the mean time, had not in any degree advanced. Except the *Merope* of Maffei, the Italians possessed scarcely a tragedy which had maintained itself on the boards.* The new pieces were forgotten in the same year in which they were produced; and the performers, when they were desirous of presenting a serious drama, were obliged to give one of the operas of Metastasio without the music. These, indeed, from their division into three acts, and their length, did not suit the modern musical composers, and they were scarcely any longer to be found on the stage of the opera. Metastasio was the favourite poet of the nation; the whole audience knew his pieces by heart, and,

* The prize offered at Parma, in 1772, for the best theatrical compositions, was awarded to five tragedies, and to three comedies. These are the oldest pieces which have remained on the stage, if we may use this expression with regard to Italy, where the celebrity of the theatre adds nothing to that of the authors, and where each manager has his separate collection. We very seldom, indeed, meet with these five tragedies on the stage, where their ephemeral reputation is almost forgotten. The first is the *Zelinda* of the Count Orazio Calini, a romantic love story, the scene of which is laid in Persia, among the successors of Artaxerxes. To this succeeds *Valsei, or the Hero of Scotland*, of Don Antonio Perabò. It is difficult, under this name, to recognize the renowned Wallace, the antagonist of Edward I., and the liberator of his country, at the close of the thirteenth century. The next were *Conrad*, the hero of Montferrat, who repulsed Saladin before the walls of Tyre, and disputed the throne of Jerusalem with Guy of Lusignan; and *Roxana*, the daughter of Bajazet, and slave of Tamerlane: both by Count Ottavio Magnocavallo. I am not acquainted with the fifth; but in these pieces we perceive rather an imitation of the softness of Metastasio, than any real attempt at true tragedy. In the despotic court of Artaxerxes, amongst the brave and savage Scotch, the fanatic Crusaders, and the wild Tartars, we hear only from the Italian poets the dulcet language of the opera; of beaming eyes which decide the destinies of heroes and empires, and of struggles between romantic passion, and duties and ambition merely theatrical.

notwithstanding, always greeted them with undiminished enthusiasm. In a preceding chapter it was no difficult task for us to expose the defects in the plots, the too great similarity of character, and the improbable scenes of these dramas; but it is by no means so easy to give any idea of that inimitable grace, and that voluptuous poetry, which, overpowering us by its inebriating sweetness, its harmony of language, and its richness of imagery, leads our imagination to the most gorgeous and beautiful creations. No author whatever, in any country, is more decidedly the poet of the heart, and of woman. He is accused by the critics of having represented the world neither as it exists, nor as it ought to exist; but the female sex approve and claim it as their own. Statesmen and moralists charge Metastasio with having had a pernicious influence on energy of character and on morals; but, on the other side, women see with pleasure that his heroism has its origin in love; that he gives a pure and noble direction to the most tender of passions, and that he attempts to unite sentiment with the observance of duty. But what may be very appropriate to the sex whose virtues and whose charms are founded on sensibility, cannot be applied to man, on whom nature has imposed principles of greater austerity.

Italy has, however, in our own days, given birth to a man who, beyond any other, was calculated by his virtues, and by his defects, to perceive the errors of Metastasio; to despise his effeminacy; to ridicule his stage effect, his suspended daggers, his love confidants, and all the factitious system which he had introduced on the stage. The Count Vittorio Alfieri, of Asti, has himself acquainted us, in his *Confessions*, with his own fierce and aspiring character, impatient of all restraint, violent, an enemy to repose, and to a mode of life which had enervated his fellow-countrymen. He regarded effeminacy as a public crime, and blamed Metastatio more for having corrupted the Italians, than for not adopting the true rules of tragedy. As soon as the predilections of his youth began to calm, and he had discontinued traversing Europe, more as a courier than as a tourist, his first verses were dictated by indignation. He had an exalted idea of the duties and the dignity of man, an ardent love of liberty, and of all the noble actions to which it has given birth; a singular ignorance

which did not allow him to judge correctly of the government of any country, and which led him to confound the dissolution of all the bonds of society with that freedom after which he sighed; and an inveterate hatred of that system of tyranny in the governments around him, which had degraded mankind. This, indeed, might be called a personal hatred, since he shared and felt more acutely than any other individual, that humiliation which for so long a time had debased the Italians.

Metastasio was the poet of love; Alfieri of freedom. All the pieces of the latter have a political tendency, and owe their eloquence, their warmth, and their rapidity, to the powerful sentiment which possessed the poet, and compelled him to write from the impulse of his soul. Alfieri did not possess the requisite talent for tragedy. His vivid emotions were not derived from his imagination, but solely from his feelings. He did not change places with his hero, to be himself moved by varied impressions; he remains always himself; and from this circumstance he is more deficient than any writer in variety of incident, and often degenerates into monotony. But, before we inquire whether we should allow his productions the title of fine tragedies, we ought, as a celebrated female has observed, when we consider the circumstances of his life, to regard them as actions commanding our admiration.

The creation of a new Italian drama by Alfieri is a phenomenon which strikes us with astonishment. Before his time the Italians were inferior to all the nations of Europe in the dramatic art. Alfieri has ranged himself by the side of the great French tragedians; and he shares with them the advantages which they possess over all others. He has united the beauties of art, unity, singleness of subject, and probability, the properties of the French drama, to the sublimity of situation and character, and the important events of the Greek theatre, and to the profound thought and sentiment of the English stage. He has rescued tragedy from the saloons of courts, to which the manners of the reign of Louis XIV. had restricted her; he has introduced her to councils, to public places, to the state; and he has given to the most elevated of poetical productions, the most noble, the most important general interest. He has annihilated the conven-

tional forms which substituted a ridiculous affectation for the sublimity of nature; the gallantry derived from the old French romances, which exhibits the heroes of Greece and Rome under a preposterous disguise; the honied sweetness and pastoral languor which, since the time of Guarini, represented all the heroic characters on the Italian stage, with effeminate sentiments and manners; the affectation of chivalry and valour, which, on the Spanish stage, attaching life itself to a delicate and scrupulous point of honour, converts the loftiest characters into bravoes, eager to destroy each other. The gallantry of romances, the effeminacy of pastorals, the point of honour of chivalry, appeared to him so many masks imposed upon nature, under which all true feelings and passions were concealed from view. He has torn off these masks, and has exhibited on the stage man in his real greatness, and in his true relations. If in this new conception of tragedy he has sometimes erred, if he has abandoned himself to exaggeration, and to a violence natural to his own character, he has still effected enough to claim our admiration. The writers who have succeeded him, and who have profited from the grandeur of his style, without incurring his peculiar faults, sufficiently prove the progress which the Italian drama made under him, and how highly it stands indebted to his genius.

We shall introduce some of his pieces in a detailed analysis, and shall endeavour to develope the beauties peculiar to them. But before we describe the style of poetry of which he was the author, we shall first proceed to combat the extravagance of his principles, and to show the true bounds where all, whom so noble a model might possibly seduce, ought to pause.

Alfieri, notwithstanding his own extraordinary character, and the entirely novel form which he has given to his tragedies, is wholly Italian in his genius. He has sometimes run into the extreme directly opposed to his predecessors, merely because he had his predecessors alone before his eyes. At the time he commenced writing, he was ignorant of Greek, scarcely acquainted with the ancients, and a stranger to the French stage; but he had been constantly accustomed to see on the stages of Italy and of other countries, during his travels indifferent or bad pieces, all in the classic style. He did not perceive the possibility of another kind; and this indepen-

dent genius, believing himself born under the legislation of Aristotle, did not dream of shaking off his sovereignty.

Trissino, in giving birth to the Italian drama by his *Sophonisba*, was the first imitator of the Greeks, although he was incapable of transferring their true feeling and spirit. All the poets of the sixteenth century, composing in the presence rather of the ancients, than of the public, before they were acquainted with the Poetics of Aristotle, or had commented on them, had sought for their rules in the ancient tragedies, and knew no other perfection than that of conforming to these models. The pedantic spirit of the age had given an undisputed authority to this system, and no one had sought, by analysis, to ascertain on what principle the law of the unities was founded. They were admitted as articles of faith, and the French themselves, who have always observed them with so much fidelity, have never regarded them with the same submission as the Italians.

Alfieri was of all poets the most rigid observer of dramatic unity. I do not speak merely of the unities of time and place, to which he has scrupulously adhered, and which, implicitly observed on the French stage, have been wholly neglected on those of Spain, Germany, and England. It is the unity of action and of interest, which forms the essence of his manner, and which is exclusively peculiar to him, although in all known theatres, as well romantic as classic, a respect for this unity is professed as an essential rule of dramatic art.

Alfieri's aim was to exhibit on the stage a single action, and a single passion ; to introduce it in the first verse and to keep it in view to the last ; not to permit the diversion of the subject for a moment, and to remove, as idle and injurious to the interest of the piece, every character, every event, and every conversation, which was not essentially connected with the plot, and which did not contribute to advance it. In this manner, expelling from the theatre all confidants and inferior parts, he has reduced almost all his tragedies to the number of four persons essential to the piece ; and at the same time suppressing all conversations foreign to the plot, he has rendered his tragedies shorter than those of any other poet. They seldom, indeed, exceed fourteen hundred lines.

It appears, however, to me, that Alfieri has deceived himself in adopting this predominating idea of poetic unity. The

perfection of the unity is found in the combined relation of numerous sensations. Harmony consists in bringing to one centre diverging sounds; it produces a vast and varied creation, animated by a single sentiment. If there be not a contrast of the composite with the simple, there is no difficulty vanquished, no charm for the mind. An union of instruments of different pitch and tone, produces a concert; but in the sound of a single bell, there can be no harmony, however fine the sound may in itself be. Thus, Alfieri, in his tragedies, touches only one string. The art of the poet consists in uniting various events, characters, and passions, in a single action, and he does not exercise this art, when all these characters are suppressed, and the action remains insulated. The simultaneous representation of several actions would not possess harmony, because it would be wanting in unity; and the representation of a single action, deprived of all accessory circumstances, has no more claim to harmony, since it is wanting in variety.

The true object of theatrical representation is to present to the spectator an action which shall seize and absorb the faculties of the soul. But it will not affect the imagination, unless it communicates a clear and precise view of the scene; that is to say, of the people among whom it is placed, of the manners, the circumstances, and the interests of the moment; unless it makes us acquainted, in the same way, with the personages and their character; and that not only in the relations of that character with the action represented, but as it forms an entire and consistent whole. Unless the tragic writer can accomplish this, it were better not to summon the spectators to the theatre. His story will produce more effect in the closet than in the representation; for the representation will not increase the illusion; if it offers to the sight nothing more than words have already expressed. But the true poet places before our eyes the Greeks as Greeks, the Germans as Germans; so that during the performance we live in the midst of them, and all which we behold derives a reality from our recollections; and he thus succeeds in combining harmony with unity, not only in all the parts of the piece, but in the ideas which previously subsisted in the minds of the spectators with respect to the nation, or the incident presented to their notice.

We have observed that Metastasio represents every thing under a conventional form, a state of society ever the same, and whose manners and characters are invariable, in whatever dress he clothes his personages, and whatever name he imposes on them. Alfieri completely banished this effeminate, peculiar, and conventional form, which reminded him of what he most held in abhorrence, the debasement of his country; but he substituted nothing in its place. The scenes of the pieces of Metastasio may be said to be in the theatre; but those of Alfieri have no scene whatever. He accomplished all the five acts without any description; and in those tragedies where the chief passion is the love of country, he has deprived the patriot of his native soil. We may remark, that every nation, perhaps every tragic poet, has a different manner of placing before the eyes of his fellow-citizens events remote in time or place; and, indeed, it is not an easy task to introduce a spectator, often uninformed, to a country and manners to which he is an entire stranger. The French have adopted the easy mode of transferring their tragic heroes to their own capital. If they describe the Greeks, all that is generally known of them is accurately and consistently painted; but for the rest, they represent manners as being the same in Greece as in Paris; and the court of Agamemnon does not, in their view, differ much from the court of Louis XIV. The Germans have proposed to themselves another kind of representation, and the spectator has reason to regret, if he be ignorant of the subject; for he will have the more pleasure the more he is acquainted with the history of the piece. They neglect nothing to make the picture faithful and complete; they sacrifice the rapidity of the action, rather than allow the imagination to remain uninformed of a single circumstance; they rely on vast information on the part of the spectator; and still unsatisfied, they devote a further quantity of time to his instruction; and this not so much in local details, which lessen the interests, as in philosophical digressions, from which the German poets are unable to abstain. This mode, however, affects the imagination by its truth of description. The illusion is irresistible, since it meets us on every side; and the drama, the manners of which are truly national and unmixed, is a panorama where the eye meets nothing foreign to the subject. Shakspeare had a greater knowledge of man than of facts;

and, in consequence, wherever he laid the scene, he created it, by the force of his genius, in an exact relation with human nature, though this relation might be false with regard to the people whose name he borrowed; and the richness of his imagination allowed him incessantly to vary these creations, and to conduct us perpetually into new enchanted countries. Lope de Vega, Calderon, and their countrymen, always place the scene in the ideal and chivalrous manners of the old Spaniards. It is not their real country, but that of their imagination, and that with which, of all others, they are best acquainted. To conclude, Metastasio has created a pastoral scenery common to all nations, while Alfieri has suppressed all circumstances of time and place.

Although the system adopted by Alfieri tended to deprive his tragedies of the charms of imagination, it cannot be denied that his motives were well judged in banishing confidants from the stage. These parts are always filled by the worst actors of the theatre. The public lends its attention to them for the purpose only of detecting something ludicrous in their parts; and, in consequence of this circumstance, whenever they appear, their intervention only enfeebles the interest of the piece. It is, moreover, quite impossible to perform these parts with effect, as the author seldom gives himself the trouble to bestow on them any character, and their situation in the piece does not permit any expression of passion. Their whole conduct, if we gave any attention to them, would excite our ridicule. They listen to accounts of what they have seen, and what they must have heard a thousand times. They always subscribe to the opinion of the person speaking, and follow him as constant as a shadow, unless when they are despatched on an errand, or when they return with an answer; a contrast to their habitual uselessness. Alfieri would have rendered the greatest service to the drama, if, in excluding confidants from the stage, he had introduced in their place secondary personages, who might have taken an inferior, but direct interest in the action, and would not have been the mere shadow of others; such persons as we find in comedy, where the action is not confined wholly to two lovers, and to a father and mother opposed to their union. There the servants have a character of their own; the friend of the family, strangers, and even idle

intruders, have a distinct physiognomy, and act in their own names and persons. There we find beings, such as nature presents us with in every event of life, who forward or retard the action by their individual views, and who, finding themselves in a less impassioned situation, possess a more distinct character; for passion effaces all shades of difference, and the individual exhibits the peculiar features of his character only in a state of rest. Real life no longer exhibits to us either heroes waiting on themselves, or constantly followed by confidants; and the suppression of the middle personages is no more conformable to truth than it is favourable to art. The Germans and the English alone have succeeded in occupying the stage with persons who have a being and an individual existence, without, at the same time, obstructing the action of the piece. The perfection of art consists in admitting these characters, and in making all contribute to the unity of the action.

These are not the only changes which Alfieri has introduced into his dramatic pieces, in opposition to the practice of his predecessors. He has rejected all the usual scenes and common-place incidents which Metastasio had introduced on the stage. He thus expresses his opinion of his own tragedies. "Here," he says, "will be found no eaves-droppers to pry into secrets, on the discovery of which the plot is to depend; none of those personages who are unknown to themselves and to others, except those whom antiquity has already presented to us, as Ægisthus in *Merope;* no departed spirits re-appearing; no thunder and lightning; no celestial interference; no useless massacre, nor threats of assassination, as revolting as unnecessary; no borrowed or improbable confessions; no love letters, crosses, funeral piles, locks of hair, or recognized swords; in short, none of those idle stratagems so often heretofore employed." He adds, that he has made it an invariable rule to introduce the action by lively and passionate dialogue, as far as is consistent with the opening of the piece, and between personages who have a direct interest in the plot; and farther, where probability and circumstances have permitted him, he has placed the catastrophe under the eyes of the spectator, and has terminated the action, as he had commenced it, on the stage. On this occasion Alfieri gives himself credit for having greatly diversified his person-

ages, in having given to every tyrant, every conspirator every queen, and every lover, an appropriate character. I doubt much whether this merit will be so fully appreciated by his readers as by Alfieri himself. On the contrary, there prevails in the tragedies of Alfieri a great monotony. Not only characters of the same class are mingled together, but even those which belong to different classes bear a resemblance to each other, and they all partake of the mind of the author. He himself was a man of too passionate, too caustic, and too independent a character, easily to adopt the sentiments and thoughts of another. From the beginning to the end of his pieces, we may trace in him the sworn foe of tyrants, the enemy of corruption, and, apparently, the enemy of all established forms of society; and as his style is always constrained and concise, almost to affectation, the expression of the sentiments, and the sentiments themselves, have too frequent and too great resemblance.

In renouncing confidants, Alfieri has often been obliged to explain events, and still more frequently the passions and the views of his characters, by soliloquies. He has, however, always made them concise, animated, and as natural as a soliloquy can be; and, no doubt, more so than the recital of a secret could be to a confidant. Theatrical representation absolutely requires that the spectators should be introduced to the motives of the principal characters; and we therefore lend ourselves, even beyond all illusion, to an improbable, but necessary, fiction. Soliloquies afford us an insight into the hearts of the personages, in the same manner as the curtain which is drawn discovers to us the apartment which is supposed to be concealed from every eye. Soliloquies, in this point of view, are much less revolting than that side acting, in which the secret reflection is unveiled to the spectator, in opposition, generally, to the performer's own words, without any passion that can excuse this involuntary utterance, and when the person, who thus speaks in a low tone, often hazards his life for the purpose of instructing the spectator. Metastasio, who calculated upon an audience little disposed, or little able to detect the emotions of the mind, never allows any of his personages to utter a falsehood, without contradicting in a low tone what he had declared in an audible voice. All the ephemeral tragic writers of Italy have done

the same thing; and, with a ridiculous simplicity, they give to their characters words which amount almost to the confession of their being base flatterers, traitors, and liars, at the same time requesting the spectators not to give credit to their candid avowal. Alfieri, while he, perhaps, too far multiplied soliloquies, has wholly interdicted these side observations. I do not recollect a single instance of them in his tragedies.

"The principal defect," he says again of himself, "which I remark in the conduct of my tragedies is uniformity. Whoever is acquainted with the structure of one is acquainted with them all. The first act is too short; the protagonist never appears on the stage before the second; there is no incident; too much dialogue; four feeble acts; chasms occasionally in the action, but the author imagines he has filled them up, or concealed them by a certain vivacity of discourse; the fifth act exceedingly short, very rapid, generally consisting of action and stage effect; the dying making very short speeches. This is an abridgment of the constant tenor of all these tragedies." When an author avows a defect in his own works, it is most probable that such defect was designed. Indeed, the uniformity with which Alfieri here reproaches himself was nothing more than the perfect conformity of all his tragedies to the model which he had prescribed to himself, and which he had always before his eyes. He adds, "The unity of action is observed with the most scrupulous rigour. The unity of place is violated thrice only; in *Philip*, *Agis*, and *The Second Brutus*. In the two first pieces, the scene is changed from a palace to a prison; in the third, from the house of a conspirator to the palace of the senate; but in no case does the change of place take the action from the same city, and from a very limited circle. The unity of time is on no occasion violated, but only sometimes slightly extended, in such a way that probability is never outraged, and the spectator is scarcely sensible of it."

But the most important change which Alfieri effected in the dramatic art of Italy was in its style. All his predecessors, agreeably to the genius of their language, had been harmonious to an excess, and had indulged, to a fault, in the softness of Italian metre. They supported their conversations by brilliant images, and by ornaments almost lyrical. They were prolix even to garrulity; and they interlarded

their dialogues with common-place morals, and with philosophical reflections and comparisons. Alfieri, to avoid these errors, fell into the contrary extreme. His four first tragedies in particular, *Philip*, *Polynice*, *Antigone* and *Virginia*, were remarkable for the excessive harshness of their style. They were the first that were published; for his nineteen theatrical pieces appeared at three different periods. Some obscurity and harshness are also found in the six following plays; although the numerous criticisms which he had drawn on himself had determined him to recast his style, to renounce his inversions, to replace the article which he had often suppressed, and to retrench the pronouns which he had repeated even to affectation. Alfieri, who dreaded beyond every thing a similarity to Metastasio, studied to render his style hard and abrupt; to break the harmony of the verse, whenever there was danger of its degenerating into singing; to run the lines into each other; to suppress all superfluous ornament, all figurative expression, and all comparison, even the most natural, as laboriously as another would have studied to clothe his verses with poetic charms. In estimating himself, he thus gives an idea of the bounds which he had prescribed to himself, but which he had far exceeded: "I may say, that with regard to style, they appear sufficiently pure, correct, and exempt from feebleness, and that their language is neither too epic, nor at any time lyrical, except when it may be so without ceasing to be tragic. It thence happens that there are no similes, except as very short images; very little narrative, which is never long, and never inserted where it is not necessary; very few maxims, and never spoken by the author; the thoughts never, and the expression seldom inflated; sometimes, though rarely, new words, in all of which we may remark that a love of brevity, rather than of novelty, has created them." Alfieri, in his criticism on his own style, has, in two points, perhaps, treated himself with too much indulgence; when he imagines that he has succeeded in rendering his language strictly tragic, because it is neither epic nor lyric; and when he says that he is free from inflation. Tragedy has, at all times, been regarded as a poem, and not a simple imitation of nature. The materials from which the writer forms his imitations, are given to him by poetry, as marble and bronze are given

to the sculptor, and colours to the painter. Neither the one nor the other would be faithful to the rules of his art, if, for a part, either in the picture or the group, he should substitute the object itself for the thing represented. The materials of the tragic poet are poetic language; he is not even allowed to substitute for this the language of nature herself. In meditation, in rage, in the pathetic, the melody of the style ought never to be abandoned; the gratification of the ear ought always to follow that of the mind; and the figurative portion of language, which adorns it with pictures drawn from universal nature, ought not to be neglected, but employed with proper moderation. Tragedy ought always to depend on poetry for its rhythm, its images, its harmony, and its colours. When an author renounces the language of poetry, he acts as a sculptor who clothes his statue with real, instead of marble vestments. Harmony and the language of imagination have been too entirely rejected by Alfieri. In almost all his tragedies we find more eloquence than poetry.

Alfieri considered himself free from the charge of an inflated style, because he had no pomp of expression, no bombast, no extravagant images; but there may still exist an inflation of style in the sentiments, constrained, harsh, exaggerated, and expressed with a conciseness, sublime, indeed, when it is rarely used, but affected, when it is employed with too lavish a hand. This poet, born in a country to which liberty is a stranger, and having neither shared nor known her blessings, had formed to himself an exaggerated and false idea of the sentiments and duties of a citizen, to which character he attached a rudeness in discourse, a bitterness of hatred, and an arrogance of opposition, which, we would hope, are far from natural. He formed for himself an ideal world, agreeably to the peculiarities and defects of his own character. He is always sententious; he always attempts to be sublime; and his affected simplicity, laconic brevity, and loudly proclaimed sentiments, cannot be considered as the true language of nature. Thus, at the commencement of the tragedy of *Octavia*, Nero and Seneca appear on the stage:

SENECA. Lord of the world, what seek'st thou?
NERO. Peace!*

* SENEC. Signor del mondo, a te che manca?
NERONE. Pace.
SENEC.

SENECA. 'Twere thine, if thou deprivedst not others of it.
NERO. 'Twere wholly Nero's, if by nuptial band
Abhorr'd, he were not with Octavia join'd.*

This opening undoubtedly possesses beauty and eloquence, but not such as are suitable to tragedy; since the natural dialogue, when the situation is not one of emotion, should never present ideas or sentiments compressed into so few words, under a form at once so epigrammatic and so affected.

Alfieri may be considered as the founder of a new school in Italy. He there effected a revolution in the theatrical art; and whatever objections may have been raised by the critics against his poetical style, his principles have been, in a manner, adopted by the public. He has effectually exploded the system of confidants. The repeated stage tricks, the daggers suspended over the heads of hostages, and the passions of the opera dare no longer shew themselves in tragedy; and Italy has, at length, adopted, as national, that system of poetry, austere, eloquent, and rapid, but, at the same time, naked, which her only tragic poet has bestowed on her. The French revolution was favourable to the fame of Alfieri. His dramas were printed and represented in countries, where, before that event, they could neither have been performed nor published. Eighteen editions succeeded each other in a short time. Two large theatres were erected, the one at Milan, the other at Bologna, by the lovers of the drama, for the recital of the pieces of Alfieri, with that complete conception and love of the art which he complained could not be found amongst the actors of Italy, and which he believed it to be impossible to obtain from them. These men, whom he considered as incapable of comprehending his works, and to whom he could never be induced to trust his tragedies, enlisted themselves under his banners, and adopted his own ideas of the drama. It is related that one of them, named Morocchesi, came one day to intreat Alfieri to assist

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SENEC. L' avrai se ad altri non la togli.
NERONE. Intera
L' avrai Neron, se di aborrito nodo
Stato non fosse a Ottavia avvinto mai.

[* The extracts from Alfieri are borrowed from Mr. C. Lloyd's characteristic and nervous translation.—*Tr.*]

at a representation of *Saul*, which he wished to give at Florence. Alfieri for a long time, and with incivility, refused, declaring that it was impossible that Morocchesi could comprehend him, or do justice to so difficult a part. He yielded, however, at length, and the actor so greatly surpassed his expectation, that Alfieri rose in the midst of the performance, and regardless of drawing on himself the eyes of the audience, encouraged the actor by applauding him with all his force, crying, "Bravo, Morocchesi!" In the course of a very few years afterwards, these tragedies, which Alfieri considered to be so little adapted to common performers, became so popular, that I have myself seen them represented by mechanics, bakers, and tailors, the greater part of whom were unable to read, and who, notwithstanding, had succeeded in committing them entirely to memory. Thus, in this country, where the imagination even of the populace is so ardent, public favour still affords deserved encouragement to genius.

It is now time for us to form a more intimate acquaintance with Alfieri, by making an analysis of some of his most celebrated pieces, as we have already done in the case of Metastasio. But the prolixity of the latter made it easy to abridge him, and to include in a small number of lines what enabled him to fill a long piece. A similar specimen of Alfieri would be incomplete. He is the most close and concise of poets, and never admits an inefficient line. He was himself of opinion, that if a spectator lost one or two verses, or had his attention distracted for a moment, it was impossible to recover the thread of the plot, and that some one of the beauties which composed the general perfection would be lost.

The first tragedy composed by Alfieri was *Philip II.* It was a subject well suited to his genius, to delineate this tyrant, the darkest monster of modern times, and to describe the secret and disastrous passion of his son Don Carlos. Isabella appears alone on the stage, and, in a passionate soliloquy, reproaches herself with the love, which she conceals in her heart, for Don Carlos, whilst she is the wife of Philip. Carlos enters her apartment; she attempts to fly; and he complains, with bitterness, that, like the common crowd of courtiers, she shuns him since he has lost his father's favour.

He implores her compassion, and congratulates himself on having obtained it. In that he finds consolation for his sufferings. Yet, of all his griefs, he says, the most severe is derived from herself.

> Ah ! thou art ignorant of my father's nature,
> And may kind Heaven that ignorance prolong !
> The treacherous intrigues of an impious court
> To thee are all unknown. An upright heart
> Could not believe, much less such guilt imagine.
> More cruel than the sycophantic train
> Surrounding him, 'tis Philip that abhors me.
> He sets the example to the servile crowd ;
> His wrathful temper chafes at nature's ties :
> Yet do I not forget that he's my father.
> If for one day I could forget that tie,
> And rouse the slumbers of my smother'd wrongs,
> Never, oh never, should he hear me mourn
> My ravish'd honours, my offended fame,
> His unexampled and unnatural hate.
> No, of a wrong more deep I would upbraid him :
> He took my all the day he tore thee from me.*

In fact, Isabel had at first been destined for the wife of Carlos. The king had encouraged their passion, but he afterwards required that their sentiments should yield to his own political views. Isabella meanwhile represses the love of Don Carlos; she represented it to him in the light of a crime: but she is powerfully agitated; and when he asks,

"Am I then so guilty?"

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* Carlo. Ah tu non sai
Qual padre io m' abbia ; e voglia il ciel, che sempre
Lo ignori tu ! gli avvolgimenti infami
D' empia corte non sai ; nè dritto core
Creder li può, non che pensarli. Crudo
Più d' ogni crudo che d' intorno egli abbia,
Filippo è quel che m' odia ; egli dà norma
Alla servil sua turba ; e d' esser padre
Se pure il sà, si adira : io d' esser figlio
Già non oblio per ciò ; ma, se obliarlo
Un dì potessi, ed allentare il freno
Ai repressi lamenti, ei non mi udrebbe
Doler, no mai, nè dei rapiti onori,
Nè della offesa fama, e non del suo
Snaturato, inaudito odio paterno ;
D' altro maggior mio danno, io mi dorrei—
Tutto ei mi ha tolto il dì che te mi tolse.

Filippo, Atto I. Sc. 2.

she replies,

"Would it were only thou!"

This avowal is understood, and Isabella, unable to retract it, presses Carlos at least to shun her presence, and to fly; or, if flight be not possible, to follow her no more, to avoid further interviews, and, since their error has only had Heaven for a witness, to conceal their passion from the world and from themselves, and to tear the recollection of it from their hearts. She is scarcely gone, when Perez unexpectedly enters, the friend of Carlos, and the only man who, in this despotic court, entertains liberal sentiments. He is surprised at the agitation of Don Carlos, and begs him to acquaint him with his griefs, that he may share them with him. Don Carlos for some time repulses his generous friendship and advises him to follow the example of the courtiers, who all consider it a crime to be faithful to him who is hated by the king. Their conversation is supported, perhaps, with more monotony than true energy, by bitter invectives against the falsehood of mankind, the corruption of courts, and the debasing effects of tyranny. Don Carlos at length gives his hand to Perez, in testimony of his inviolable friendship, and as an earnest of his promise, to allow him to share his sufferings, though he cannot disclose his secret.

The first scene of the second act, between Philip and his minister, Gomez,* commences in a manner so laconic and sententious, that it might easily degenerate into affectation. When, however, it is in character, as in this sombre court, it possesses an imposing beauty.

PHILIP. What, above all things that this world can give,
Dost thou hold dear? †

* Ruy Gomez de Sylva was, in fact, one of the three confidants of Philip, and with the Duke of Alva, and the President Spinosa, was the object of the jealousy of the prince, and the instrument of the hatred of the king. Antonio Perez, who, after escaping the tyranny of Philip, wrote the memoirs of this horrible court, is probably the historical personage whom Alfieri has here ennobled in point of character, and made the confidant of Carlos. The poet has, on the whole, conformed himself accurately to the circumstances of this catastrophe, as delivered to us by history. Don Carlos perished at the age of twenty-two, in February 1568.

† FIL. Gomez, qual cosa sovra ogni altra al mondo
In pregio hai tu?

GOMEZ. Thy favour.
PHILIP. By what means
Dost hope to keep it?
GOMEZ. By the means that gained it:
Obedience and silence.
PHILIP. Thou art called
This day to practise both.

In this manner, Philip instructs Gomez to observe the queen, during a conversation that he designs to have with her. He thus prepares the spectators to observe all her feelings; and he himself manifests suspicions, which he is unwilling to reveal in words. Isabella arrives. Philip consults her respecting his son. He accuses him of the most odious treason, in having maintained a correspondence with the rebels of Batavia; in having supported them in their revolt against their God and their king; and in having, on that very day, given audience to their ambassador. But this is not the suspicion which dwells on his mind. His words, commenced in an equivocal manner, are artfully broken in such a way that Isabella may believe that he has discovered their mutual attachment. Isabella trembles at every dubious expression, and the spectator with her.

PHI. But tell me, also, ere the fact I state,
And tell without reserve, dost love or hate
Carlos, my son?
ISA. My Lord?
PHI. I understand thee,
If thou didst yield to thy first impulses,
And not obey the stern behests of duty,
Thou wouldst behold him . . . as a step-dame.*

GOM. La grazia tua.
FIL. Qual mezzo
Stimi a serbarla?
GOM. Il mezzo, ond' io la ottenni;
Obbedirti et tacermi.
FIL. Oggi tu dunque
Far l' uno e l' altro dei.

* FIL. Ma, dimmi inoltre, anziche il fatto io narri,
E dimmi il ver: Carlo, il mio figlio . . . l'ami?
O l'odi tu?
ISAB. . . . Signor . . .
FIL. Ben già t' intendo.
Se del tuo cor gli affetti, e non le voci
Di tua virtude ascolti, a lui tu senti
D' esser . . . madrigna.

ISAB

ISA. No.
Thou art deceived .... The prince ....
PHI. Is dear, then, to thee.
Yet hast thou so much of true honour left,
That being Philip's wife, that Philip's son
Thou lov'st with ... love maternal.
ISA. Thou alone
Art law to all my thoughts: thou lovest him;
At least I deem so: and e'en so I love him.
PHI. Since thy well regulated, noble heart,
Beholds not Carlos with a step-dame's thought,
Nor with blind instinct of maternal fondness,
I choose thee for that Carlos as a judge.
ISA. Me?
PHI. Thou hast heard it. Carlos the first object
Was, many, many years, of all my hope;
Till, having turn'd his footsteps from the path
Of virtue, he that lofty hope betray'd.
How many pleas did I, from time to time,
Invent, to excuse my disobedient son?
But now his insane, impious hardihood,
Hath reached its greatest height, and I'm compell'd,
Compell'd against my will, to means of violence.
To his past crimes such turpitude he adds,
Such, that compared with this, all others vanish:
Such, that words fail me to express his baseness.

ISAB. Ah! no; t' inganni—il prence ...
FIL. Ti è caro dunque: in te virtude adunque
Cotanta hai tu, che de Filippo sposa,
Tu di Filippo il figlio ami d' amore—
Materno.
ISAB. ... A miei pensier tu sol sei norma.
Tu l' ami ... o il credo almeno ... e in simil guisa
Anch' io ... l'amo.
FIL. Poich' entro il tuo ben nato
Gran cor, non cape il madrignal talento,
Nè il cieco amor senti di madre, in voglio
Giudice te del mio figliuol.
ISAB. Ch' io?
FIL M' odi.
Carlo d ogni mia speme unico oggetto
Molti anni fu; pria che. ritorto il piede
Dal sentier di virtude, ogni alta mia
Speme ei tradisse. Oh! quante volte io poscia
Paterne scuse ai replicati falli
Del mal docile figlio in me cercava!
Ma già il suo ardire temerario insano
Giunse oggi al sommo; e violenti mezzi
Usar pur troppo ora degg' io. Delitto
Cotal si oggiunge ai suoi delitti tanti;

With outrage so immense he hath assail'd me,
As all comparison to baffle ; such,
That, from a son, no father could expect it ;
Such, that no longer I account him son.
Ah! thou e'en shudderest ere thou knowest its vastness :
Hear it, and shudder in another fashion.
More than five years, thou knowest, a wretched crew
On swampy soil and shores whelm'd by the ocean,
Have dared my sov'reign mandate to resist,
Rebels no less to God than to their king, &c.

Yet, when the crime of the Prince is explicitly declared, she undertakes his defence with noble eloquence and courage. The king appears to be convinced: he sends for Carlos; and, while interrogating him, he alarms him by the same artifices. He speaks to him of the affection of the queen, the maternal affection that had led her to undertake his defence; he seems even to be aware of their interview in the first act; but, after having alarmed them both, he dismisses them with an apparent return of kindness, and advises them to see each other frequently. This double examination, which makes us shudder, is terminated by a scene, in three verses between Philip and Gomez.

PHIL. Heard'st thou?
GOM. I heard.
PHIL. Sawest thou?
GOM. I saw.
PHIL. Oh, rage!
Then, then, suspicion—*

Tale, appo cui tutt' altro è nulla ; tale
Ch' ogni mio dir vien manco. Oltraggio ei fammi
Che par non ha ; tal, che da un figlio il padre
Mai non l' attende ; tal, che agli occhi miei
Già non più figlio il fa . . . Ma che? tu stessa
Pria di saperlo fremi? . . . Odilo, e fremi
Ben altramente poi.—Già più d' un lustro
Dell' océan là sul sepolto lido
Povero stuolo, in paludosa terra
Sai che far fronte al mio poter si attenta, etc.
Atto II. sc. 2.

* FIL. Udisti?
GOM. Udii.
FIL. Vedesti?
GOM. Io vidi.
FIL. Oh rabbia!
Dunque il sospetto?—

GOM.

GOM. Now is certainty.
PHIL. And Philip yet is unrevenged?
GOM. Reflect—
PHIL. I have reflected. Follow thou my footsteps.

Carlos, who well knows his father's character, is alarmed at the sympathy which he has manifested, and above all, at his kindness, which, with him, is always the harbinger of a more terrible hatred. He seeks an interview with the queen. He communicates to her his fears at the commencement of the third act, and he conjures her never to speak of him again to the king. The queen cannot believe him; she retires; and Gomez entering, congratulates Carlos on being again received into favour by the king, professes his devotion to him, and tenders his services; but Carlos turns his back on him, and goes off without deigning to reply. Philip then, in the same saloon, assembles a council. He appears, followed by his guards, by several counsellors of state, who are silent, by Perez, and by Lionardo, who doubtless was intended by the author for the Grand Inquisitor, but to whom he has not given that title. Philip, in a crafty discourse, informs his council that he has assembled them to judge his son. He then accuses Don Carlos of having attempted to assassinate him; and says, that the prince had approached him from behind, his sword raised to strike him, when a cry from one of his courtiers put him to flight. Gomez supports the accusation; he produces intercepted letters of the prince, which he pretends afford proofs of a treasonable correspondence with France, and with the revolted Hollanders; and he concludes by adjudging Don Carlos to death. Lionardo then speaks; and, in a hypocritical and ferocious speech, charges Don Carlos with heresy and impiety, and requires the king to lend his arm in avenging the cause of offended Heaven Perez then speaks, and triumphantly exculpates his friend. He easily proves that all the accusations are feigned, and he does not suffer a doubt to remain on the mind of any present;

GOM. E' omai certezza—
FIL. E inulto
Filippo è ancor!
GOM. Pensa—
FIL. Pensai—Mi segui
Atto II. Sc. 5.

but he addresses the king himself and his counsellors with an outrageous arrogance, which it would have been unbecoming in Philip to allow ; and in the character of Perez we plainly recognize Alfieri himself. All these characters are too highly exaggerated ; the contrast between the crime or baseness of some, and the hardy independence of others, is too abrupt ; and this scene of the council, although the four speeches are written with great eloquence, does not produce the effect which it might have done, if probability had been less violated. Philip dismisses his advisers, and desires them to pass judgment on his son in his absence. When alone, in violent exasperation against Perez, he exclaims,

> And can a soul so form'd
> Spring, where I reign ? or where I reign, exist ?

Carlos, at the commencement of the fourth act, expects a confidant of the queen, who is frequently mentioned in the course of the play, but who never appears. The king, preceded by his guard, approaches. It is night. Carlos, seeing the soldiers advance, draws his sword to defend himself, but replaces it when he sees the king. The king accuses him of having raised his arm against him, and there ensues between them a violent altercation, in which Carlos employs the most outrageous and bitter language, such as Alfieri always assigns to the enemies of tyrants, and which the latter must be endowed with more than human patience to support. Philip orders his son to be arrested and conducted to a dark prison. Alfieri informs us, that, in the first sketch of this tragedy, the council was placed in the fourth act. It was there held in consequence of this interview, and the fact of Carlos having drawn his sword served as a pretext for an accusation of parricide. Alfieri has inverted this order, that the accusation of Philip might appear gratuitous, and might excite a greater horror. It appears, however, to me, that he has erred in this. It produces confusion in the progress of the piece, when this second accusation follows the first ; and if Alfieri wished that the accusation which Philip made in council should be absolutely gratuitous he ought to have suppressed this imprudent quarrel, which is not natural, which nothing justifies, and which has no result.

While Carlos is led to prison, Isabella enters. She is

alarmed; and Philip increases her fears by his equivocal words respecting the prince, which occasion her to be further compromised in the eyes of the king. Her attachment may not, perhaps, have escaped the observation of the tyrant; she fears she may have said too much, and probably betrayed herself. When she is left alone, Gomez enters, carrying to the king the sentence of the council, who have condemned his son to death. He communicates to the queen the message with which he is charged; he gains her confidence by compassionating the prince; and leads her on to manifest the deep interest which she feels for him. In his turn, he unveils the atrocious character of Philip; he leaves no doubt of the innocence of Carlos; he promises, at last, to the queen, to introduce her into the prison; and, though we are previously aware that Gomez is not likely to sacrifice the interests of Philip in the presence of the queen, except to draw her into a confession, there yet results from the assistance which he promises, a revival of hope in the spectators. which supports the interest of the piece.

The scene of the fifth act is in the prison. Carlos is there alone, awaiting his death with constancy. His only fear is, lest his father should have any suspicion of his love for Isabella, his words and looks having alarmed him. Isabella herself suddenly enters the dungeon; she announces to Don Carlos his approaching fate, if he does not fly; but Gomez, she informs him, has prepared for his escape, and it is by his aid that she has obtained admission into this place of darkness. Carlos then sees the abyss into which she has fallen as well as himself, and addresses Isabella—

> Incautious queen!
> Thou art too credulous! what hast thou done?
> Why didst thou trust to such a feign'd compassion?
> Of the impious king, most impious minister,
> If he spoke truth, 'twas with the truth to cheat thee.

He entreats her to fly while there is yet time; to save her honour; and to remove all pretext for the ferocious vengeance of the king. But whilst she is refusing to fly, Philip appears. He expresses a savage joy in having them both completely in his power. He has been acquainted with their passion from its commencement, and has observed the progress of it, unknown to themselves. His jealousy is not of the heart, but of offended pride, and he now avows it. Carlos attempts to

justify Isabella, but she rejects all excuse; she asks for death to liberate her from this horrible palace; she provokes Philip by exasperating language; and Alfieri here again places his own feelings, and his own expressions of hatred, in the mouth of his personages. Gomez returns, bearing a cup, and a poniard still reeking with the blood of Perez. Philip offers to the two lovers the choice of the dagger or the bowl. Carlos chooses the dagger, and strikes himself a mortal blow. Isabella congratulates herself on dying, and Philip, to punish her the more, condemns her to life; but she snatches from the person of the king his own dagger, and kills herself in her turn. This stage trick appears to me to be beneath the dignity of Alfieri. A king is not easily robbed of his poniard, and it was scarcely worth while to calculate the action so nicely, if the catastrophe was to depend on the chance of Isabella finding herself on the right, instead of the left side of the king; and on the poniard of the king, if he carried one, not being fastened in his girdle, or hidden by the folds of his dress.

Such is Alfieri, who paints with terrific truth the profound dissimulation of the Spanish monarch; throws a sombre veil over his councils and his policy; and conducts him to the close of the piece without his revealing to any one his secret thoughts. If we should one day treat of the German theatre, we may then compare the Don Carlos of Schiller with this powerful tragedy. The German poet has succeeded better in his representation of the national manners, of the age, and of the events; but he is far inferior to Alfieri in the delineation of the character of Philip. He has deprived it of all that terror, derived from the dark and impenetrable silence with which the tyrant invests himself. It is a master-stroke in Alfieri, to have assigned a confidant to Philip, to whom he communicates nothing, even at the moment that he calls him to his councils. The silent concert between Gomez, Lionardo, and the king, in the perpetration of the crime, excites the most profound terror; whilst Schiller has given to Philip an openness of heart, which he evinces even towards the Marquis de Posa, whose character, wholly German, could never have accorded with that of the king

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